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MACAULAY'S MISCELLANIES.

COMIC DRAMATISTS OF THE RESTORATION.*

[Edinburgh Review, January, 1841.]

We have a kindness for Mr. Leigh Hunt. We form our judgment of him, indeed, only from events of universal notoriety—from his own works, and from the works of other writers, who have generally abused him in the most rancorous manner. But, unless we are greatly mistaken, he is a very clever, a very honest, and a very good-natured man. We can clearly discern, together with many merits, many serious faults, both in his writings and in his conduct. But we really think that there is hardly a man living whose merits have been so grudgingly allowed, and whose faults have been so cruelly expiated.

In some respects, Mr. Leigh Hunt is excellently qualified for the task which he has now undertaken. His style, in spite of its mannerism—nay, partly by reason of its mannerism—is well suited for light, garrulous desultory *ana*, half critical, half biographical. We do not always agree with his literary judgments; but we find in him what is very rare in our time—the power of justly appreciating

* *The Dramatic Works of* Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, *and* Farquhar. *With Biographical and Critical Notices.* By Leigh Hunt. 8vo. London; 1840.

and heartily enjoying good things of very different kinds. He can adore Shakspeare and Spenser without denying poetical genius to the author of "Alexander's Feast;" or fine observation, rich fancy, and exquisite humour to him who imagined "Will Honeycomb" and "Sir Roger de Coverley." He has paid particular attention to the history of the English drama, from the age of Elizabeth down to our own time, and has every right to be heard with respect on that subject.

The plays to which he now acts as introducer are, with few exceptions, such as, in the opinion of many very respectable people, ought not to be reprinted. In this opinion we can by no means concur. We cannot wish that any work or class of works which has exercised a great influence on the human mind, and which illustrates the character of an important epoch in letters, politics, and morals, should disappear from the world. If we err in this matter, we err with the gravest men and bodies of men in the empire, and especially with the Church of England, and with the great schools of learning which are connected with her. The whole liberal education of our countrymen is conducted on the principle, that no book which is valuable, either by reason of the excellence of its style, or by reason of the light which it throws on the history, polity, and manners of nations, should be withheld from the student on account of its impurity. The Athenian Comedies, in which there are scarcely a hundred lines together without some passage of which Rochester would have been ashamed, have been reprinted at the Pitt Press and the Clarendon Press, under the direction of syndics and delegates appointed by the Universities; and have been illustrated with notes by reverend, very reverend, and right reverend commentators.

Every year the most distinguished young men in the

kingdom are examined by bishops and professors of divinity in the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes, and the Sixth Satire of Juvenal. There is certainly something a little ludicrous in the idea of a conclave of venerable fathers of the church rewarding a lad for his intimate acquaintance with writings, compared with which the loosest tale in Prior is modest. But for our own part we have no doubt that the great societies which direct the education of the English gentry, have herein judged wisely. It is unquestionable that an extensive acquaintance with ancient literature enlarges and enriches the mind. It is unquestionable that a man whose mind has been thus enlarged and enriched, is likely to be far more useful to the state and to the church, than one who is unskilled, or little skilled in classical learning. On the other hand, we find it difficult to believe that, in a world so full of temptation as this, any gentleman, whose life would have been virtuous if he had not read Aristophanes and Juvenal, will be made vicious by reading them. A man who, exposed to all the influences of such a state of society as that in which we live, is yet afraid of exposing himself to the influences of a few Greek or Latin verses, acts, we think, much like the felon who begged the sheriffs to let him have an umbrella held over his head from the door of Newgate to the gallows, because it was a drizzling morning, and he was apt to take cold.

The virtue which the world wants is a healthful virtue, not a valetudinarian virtue—a virtue which can expose itself to the risks inseparable from all spirited exertion—not a virtue which keeps out of the common air for fear of infection, and eschews the common food as too stimulating. It would be indeed absurd to attempt to keep men from acquiring those qualifications which fit them to play their part in life with honour to themselves and advantage to their country, for the sake of preserving a delicacy which

cannot be preserved—a delicacy which a walk from Westminster to the Temple is sufficient to destroy.

But we should be justly chargeable with gross inconsistency, if, while we defend the policy which invites the youth of our country to study such writers as Theocritus and Catullus, we were to set up a cry against a new edition of the "Country Wife," or the "Way of the World." The immoral English writers of the seventeenth century are indeed much less excusable than those of Greece and Rome. But the worst English writings of the seventeenth century are decent, compared with much that has been bequeathed to us by Greece and Rome. Plato, we have little doubt, was a much better man than Sir George Etherege. But Plato has written things at which Sir George Etherege would have shuddered. Buckhurst and Sedley, even in those wild orgies at the Cock in Bow Street, for which they were pelted by the rabble and fined by the Court of King's Bench, would never have dared to hold such discourse as passed between Socrates and Phædrus on that fine summer day, under the plane-tree, while the fountain warbled at their feet, and the cicadas chirped overhead. If it be, as we think it is, desirable that an English gentleman should be well informed touching the government and the manners of little commonwealths, which both in place and time are far removed from us—whose independence has been more than two thousand years extinguished, whose language has not been spoken for ages, and whose ancient magnificence is attested only by a few broken columns and friezes—much more must it be desirable that he should be intimately acquainted with the history of the public mind of his own country; and with the causes, the nature, and the extent of those revolutions of opinion and feeling, which, during the last two centuries, have alternately raised and depressed the standard of our national morality. And knowledge of this

sort is to be very sparingly gleaned from Parliamentary debates, from state papers, and from the works of grave historians. It must either not be acquired at all, or it must be acquired by the perusal of the light literature which has at various periods been fashionable. We are therefore by no means disposed to condemn this publication, though we certainly cannot recommend the handsome volume* before us as an appropriate Christmas present for young ladies.

We have said that we think the present publication perfectly justifiable. But we can by no means agree with Mr. Leigh Hunt, who seems to hold that there is little or no ground for the charge of immorality so often brought against the literature of the Restoration. We do not blame him for not bringing to the judgment-seat the merciless rigour of Lord Angelo; but we really think that such flagitious and impudent offenders as those who are now at the bar, deserved at least the gentle rebuke of Escalus. Mr. Leigh Hunt treats the whole matter a little too much in the easy style of Lucio, and perhaps his exceeding lenity disposes us to be somewhat too severe.

And yet it is not easy to be too severe. For, in truth, this part of our literature is a disgrace to our language and our national character. It is clever, indeed, and very entertaining; but it is, in the most emphatic sense of the words, "earthly, sensual, devilish." Its indecency, though perpetually such as is condemned, not less by the rules of good taste than by those of morality, is not, in our opinion,

* Mr. Moxon, its publisher, is well entitled to commendation and support for having, by a series of corresponding Reprints, (comprising the works of the elder Dramatists,)—executed in a compendious but very comely form, and accompanied with useful prolegomena—put it in the power of any one desirous of such an acquisition, to procure at a comparatively small cost, the noblest Dramatic Library in the world.

so disgraceful a fault as its singularly inhuman spirit. We have here Belial, not as when he inspired Ovid and Ariosto, "graceful and humane," but with the iron eye and cruel sneer of Mephistopheles. We find ourselves in a world, in which the ladies are like very profligate, impudent and unfeeling men, and in which the men are too bad for any place but Pandæmonium or Norfolk Island. We are surrounded by foreheads of bronze, hearts like the nether millstone, and tongues set on fire of hell.

Dryden defended or excused his own offences, and those of his contemporaries, by pleading the example of the earlier English dramatists: and Mr. Leigh Hunt seems to think that there is force in the plea. We altogether differ from this opinion. The crime charged is not mere coarseness of expression. The terms which are delicate in one age, become gross in the next. The diction of the English version of the Pentateuch, is sometimes such as Addison would not have ventured to imitate; and Addison, the standard of purity in his own age, used many phrases which are now proscribed. Whether a thing shall be designated by a plain noun-substantive, or by a circumlocution, is mere matter of fashion. Morality is not at all interested in the question. But morality is deeply interested in this—that what is immoral shall not be presented to the imagination of the young and susceptible in constant connection with what is attractive. For every person who has observed the operation of the law of association in his own mind, and in the minds of others, knows, that whatever is constantly presented to the imagination in connection with what is attractive, will commonly itself become attractive. There is undoubtedly a great deal of indelicate writing in Fletcher and Massinger; and more than might be wished even in Ben Jonson and Shakspeare, who are comparatively pure. But it is impossible to trace in their plays

any systematic attempt to associate vice with those things which men value most and desire most, and virtue with everything ridiculous and degrading. And such a systematic attempt we find in the whole dramatic literature of the generation which followed the return of Charles the Second. We will take, as an instance of what we mean, a single subject of the highest importance to the happiness of mankind—conjugal fidelity. We can at present hardly call to mind a single English play, written before the civil war, in which the character of a seducer of married women is represented in a favourable light. We remember many plays in which such persons are baffled, exposed, covered with derision, and insulted by triumphant husbands. Such is the fate of Falstaff, with all his wit and knowledge of the world. Such is the fate of Brisac in Fletcher's "Elder Brother"—and of Ricardo and Ubaldo, in Massinger's "Picture." Sometimes, as in the "Fatal Dowry," and "Love's Cruelty," the outraged honour of families is repaired by a bloody revenge. If now and then the lover is represented as an accomplished man, and the husband as a person of weak or odious character, this only makes the triumph of female virtue the more signal; as in Jonson's Celia and Mrs. Fitzdottrel, and in Fletcher's Maria. In general we will venture to say, that the dramatists of the age of Elizabeth and James the First, either treat the breach of the marriage-vow as a serious crime—or, if they treat it as matter for laughter, turn the laugh against the gallant.

On the contrary, during the forty years which followed the Restoration, the whole body of the dramatists invariably represent adultery—we do not say as a peccadillo—we do not say as an error which the violence of passion may excuse—but as the calling of a fine gentleman—as a grace without which his character would be imperfect. It is as

essential to his breeding and to his place in society that he should make love to the wives of his neighbours, as that he should know French, or that he should have a sword at his side. In all this there is no passion, and scarcely anything that can be called preference. The hero intrigues, just as he wears a wig; because, if he did not, he would be a queer fellow, a city prig, perhaps a Puritan. All the agreeable qualities are always given to the gallant. All the contempt and aversion are the portion of the unfortunate husband. Take Dryden for example; and compare Woodall with Brainsick, or Lorenzo with Gomez. Take Wycherley, and compare Horner with Pinchwife. Take Vanbrugh, and compare Constant with Sir John Brute. Take Farquhar, and compare Archer with Squire Sullen. Take Congreve, and compare Belmour with Fondlewife, Careless with Sir Paul Plyant, or Scandal with Foresight. In all these cases, and in many more which might be named, the dramatist evidently does his best to make the person who commits the injury graceful, sensible and spirited; and the person who suffers it a fool or a tyrant, or both.

Mr. Charles Lamb, indeed, attempted to set up a defence for this way of writing. The dramatists of the latter part of the seventeenth century are not, according to him, to be tried by the standard of morality which exists, and ought to exist in real life. Their world is a conventional world. Their heroes and heroines belong, not to England, not to Christendom, but to an Utopia of gallantry, to a Fairyland, where the Bible and Burns's Justice are unknown—where a prank, which on this earth would be rewarded with the pillory, is merely matter for a peal of elvish laughter. A real Horner, a real Careless would, it is admitted, be exceedingly bad men. But to predicate morality or immorality of the Horner of Wycherly, and the Careless of Congreve, is as absurd as it would be to arraign a sleeper for

his dreams. They belong "to the regions of pure comedy, where no cold moral reigns—when we are amongst them we are amongst a chaotic people. We are not to judge them by our usages. No reverend institutions are insulted by their proceedings, for they have none among them. No peace of families is violated, for no family ties exist among them. There is neither right nor wrong—gratitude or its opposite—claim or duty—paternity or sonship."

This is, we believe, a fair summary of Mr. Lamb's doctrine. We are sure that we do not wish to represent him unfairly. For we admire his genius; we love the kind nature which appears in all his writings; and we cherish his memory as much as if we had known him personally. But we must plainly say that his argument, though ingenious, is altogether sophistical.

Of course we perfectly understand that it is possible for a writer to create a conventional world in which things forbidden by the Decalogue and the Statute Book shall be lawful, and yet that the exhibition may be harmless, or even edifying. For example, we suppose that the most austere critics would not accuse Fenelon of impiety and immorality, on account of his Telemachus and his Dialogues of the Dead. In Telemachus and the Dialogues of the Dead, we have a false religion, and consequently a morality which is in some points incorrect. We have a right and a wrong, differing from the right and the wrong of real life. It is represented as the first duty of men to pay honour to Jove and Minerva. Philocles, who employs his leisure in making graven images of these deities, is extolled for his piety in a way which contrasts singularly with the expressions of Isaiah on the same subject. The dead are judged by Minos, and rewarded with lasting happiness for actions which Fenelon would have been the first to pronounce splendid sins. The same may be said of Mr. Southey's

Mahommedan and Hindoo heroes and heroines. In Thalaba, to speak in derogation of the Arabian impostor is blasphemy—to drink wine is a crime—to perform ablutions, and to pay honour to the holy cities, are works of merit. In the Curse of Kehama, Kailyal is commended for her devotion to the statue of Mariataly, the goddess of the poor. But certainly no person will accuse Mr. Southey of having promoted or intended to promote either Islamism or Brahminism.

It is easy to see why the conventional worlds of Fenelon and Mr. Southey are unobjectionable. In the first place, they are utterly unlike the real world in which we live. The state of society, the laws even of the physical world, are so different from those with which we are familiar, that we cannot be shocked at finding the morality also very different. But in truth, the morality of these conventional worlds differs from the morality of the real world, only in points where there is no danger that the real world will ever go wrong. The generosity and docility of Telemachus, the fortitude, the modesty, the filial tenderness of Kailyal, are virtues of all ages and nations. And there was very little danger that the Dauphin would worship Minerva, or that an English damsel would dance with a bucket on her head before the statue of Mariataly.

The case is widely different with what Mr. Charles Lamb calls the conventional world of Wycherley and Congreve. Here the costume, and manners, the topics of conversation, are those of the real town, and of the passing day. The hero is in all superficial accomplishments exactly the fine gentleman, whom every youth in the pit would gladly resemble. The heroine is the fine lady, whom every youth in the pit would gladly marry. The scene is laid in some place which is as well known to the audience as their own houses, in St. James's Park, or Hyde Park, or

Westminster Hall. The lawyer bustles about with his bag, between the Common Pleas and the Exchequer. The Peer calls for his carriage to go to the House of Lords on a private bill. A hundred little touches are employed to make the fictitious world appear like the actual world. And the immorality is of a sort which never can be out of date, and which all the force of religion, law, and public opinion united can but imperfectly restrain.

In the name of art, as well as in the name of virtue, we protest against the principle that the world of pure comedy is one into which no moral enters. If comedy be an imitation, under whatever conventions, of real life, how is it possible that it can have no reference to the great rule which directs life, and to feelings which are called forth by every incident of life? If what Mr. Charles Lamb says were correct, the inference would be, that these dramatists did not in the least understand the very first principles of their craft. Pure landscape painting into which no light or shade enters, pure portrait painting into which no expression enters, are phrases less at variance with sound criticism, than pure comedy into which no moral enters.

But it is not the fact, that the world of these dramatists is a world into which no moral enters. Morality constantly enters into that world, a sound morality, and an unsound morality; the sound morality to be insulted, derided, associated with everything mean and hateful; the unsound morality to be set off to every advantage, and inculcated by all methods, direct and indirect. It is not the fact, that none of the inhabitants of this conventional world feel reverence for sacred institutions, and family ties. Fondlewife, Pinchwife, every person in short of narrow understanding, and disgusting manners, expresses that reverence strongly. The heroes and heroines too, have a moral code of their own, an exceedingly bad one; but not, as Mr.

Charles Lamb seems to think, a code existing only in the imagination of dramatists. It is, on the contrary, a code actually received, and obeyed by great numbers of people. We need not go to Utopia or Fairyland to find them. They are near at hand. Every night some of them play at the "hells" in the Quadrant, and others pace the Piazza in Covent-Garden. Without flying to Nephelococcygia, or to the Court of Queen Mab, we can meet with sharpers, bullies, hard-hearted impudent debauchees, and women worthy of such paramours. The morality of the "Country Wife" and the "Old Bachelor," is the morality, not, as Mr. Charles Lamb maintains, of an unreal world, but of a world which is a great deal too real. It is the morality, not of a chaotic people, but of low town-rakes, and of those ladies whom the newspapers call "dashing Cyprians." And the question is simply, whether a man of genius, who constantly and systematically endeavours to make this sort of character attractive, by uniting it with beauty, grace, dignity, spirit, a high social position, popularity, literature, wit, taste, knowledge of the world, brilliant success in every undertaking, does or does not make an ill use of his powers. We own that we are unable to understand how this question can be answered in any way but one.

It must, indeed, be acknowledged, in justice to the writers of whom we have spoken thus severely, that they were, to a great extent, the creatures of their age. And if it be asked why that age encouraged immorality which no other age would have tolerated, we have no hesitation in answering that this great depravation of the national taste was the effect of the prevalence of Puritanism under the Commonwealth.

To punish public outrages on morals and religion is unquestionably within the competence of rulers. But when a government, not content with requiring decency, requires

sanctity, it oversteps the bounds which mark its proper functions. And it may be laid down as a universal rule, that a government which attempts more than it ought will perform less. A lawgiver who, in order to protect distressed borrowers, limits the rate of interest, either makes it impossible for the objects of his care to borrow at all, or places them at the mercy of the worst class of usurers. A lawgiver who, from tenderness for labouring men, fixes the hours of their work and the amount of their wages, is certain to make them far more wretched than he found them. And so a government which, not content with repressing scandalous excesses, demands from its subjects fervent and austere piety, will soon discover that, while attempting to render an impossible service to the cause of virtue, it has in truth only promoted vice.

For what are the means by which a government can effect its ends? Two only, rewards and punishments;—powerful means, indeed, for influencing the exterior act, but altogether impotent for the purpose of touching the heart. A public functionary who is told that he will be advanced if he is a devout Catholic, and turned out of his place if he is not, will probably go to mass every morning, exclude meat from his table on Fridays, shrive himself regularly, and perhaps let his superiors know that he wears a hair shirt next to his skin. Under a Puritan government, a person who is apprised that piety is essential to thriving in the world, will be strict in the observance of the Sunday, or, as he will call it, Sabbath, and will avoid a theatre as if it were plague-stricken. Such a show of religion as this, the hope of gain and the fear of loss will produce, at a week's notice, in any abundance which a government may require. But under this show, sensuality, ambition, avarice, and hatred retain unimpaired power; and the seeming convert has only added to the vices of a man of the world all the still darker

vices which are engendered by the constant practice of dissimulation. The truth cannot be long concealed. The public discovers that the grave persons who are proposed to it as patterns, are more utterly destitute of moral principle and of moral sensibility than avowed libertines. It sees that these Pharisees are further removed from real goodness than publicans and harlots. And, as usual, it rushes to the extreme opposite to that which it quits. It considers a high religious profession as a sure mark of meanness and depravity. On the very first day on which the restraint of fear is taken away, and on which men can venture to say what they feel, a frightful peal of blasphemy and ribaldry proclaims that the short-sighted policy which aimed at making a nation of saints has made a nation of scoffers.

It was thus in France about the beginning of the eighteenth century. Louis the Fourteenth in his old age became religious, and determined that his subjects should be religious too—shrugged his shoulders and knitted his brows if he observed at his levee or near his dinner-table any gentleman who neglected the duties enjoined by the Church—and rewarded piety with blue ribands, invitations to Marli, governments, pensions, and regiments. Forthwith Versailles became, in everything but dress, a convent. The pulpits and confessionals were surrounded by swords and embroidery. The marshals of France were much in prayer; and there was hardly one among the dukes and peers who did not carry good little books in his pocket, fast during Lent, and communicate at Easter. Madame de Maintenon, who had a great share in the blessed work, boasted that devotion had become quite the fashion. A fashion indeed it was; and like a fashion it passed away. No sooner had the old king been carried to St. Denis, than the whole court unmasked. Every man hastened to indemnify himself, by the excess of licentiousness and impudence, for

years of mortification. The same persons who, a few months before, with meek voices and demure looks, had consulted divines about the state of their souls, now surrounded the midnight table, where, amidst the bounding of champagne corks, a drunken prince, enthroned between Dubois and Madame de Parabère, hiccoughed out atheistical arguments and obscene jests. The early part of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth had been a time of license; but the most dissolute men of that generation would have blushed at the orgies of the Regency.

It was the same with our fathers in the time of the Great Civil War. We are by no means unmindful of the great debt which mankind owes to the Puritans of that time, the deliverers of England, the founders of the great American Commonwealths. But in the day of their power they committed one great fault, which left deep and lasting traces in the national character and manners. They mistook the end and overrated the force of government. They determined not merely to protect religion and public morals from insult —an object for which the civil sword, in discreet hands, may be beneficially employed—but to make the people committed to their rule truly devout. Yet if they had only reflected on events which they had themselves witnessed, and in which they had themselves borne a great part, they would have seen what was likely to be the result of their enterprise. They had lived under a government which, during a long course of years, did all that could be done, by lavish bounty and rigorous punishment, to enforce conformity to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England. No person suspected of hostility to that church had the smallest chance of obtaining favour at the court of Charles. Avowed dissent was punished by imprisonment, by ignominious exposure, by cruel mutilations, and by ruinous fines. And the event had been, that the Church had

fallen, and had, in its fall, dragged down with it a monarchy which had stood six hundred years. The Puritan might have learned, if from nothing else, yet from his own recent victory, that governments which attempt things beyond their reach are likely not merely to fail, but to produce an effect directly the opposite of that which they contemplate as desirable.

All this was overlooked. The saints were to inherit the earth. The theatres were closed. The fine arts were placed under absurd restraints. Vices which had never before been even misdemeanours were made capital felonies. And it was solemnly resolved by Parliament, "that no person should be employed but such as the House shall be satisfied of his real godliness." The pious assembly had a Bible lying on the table for reference. If they had consulted it they might have learned that the wheat and the tares grow together inseparably, and must either be spared together, or rooted up together. To know whether a man was really godly was impossible. But it was easy to know whether he had a plain dress, lank hair, no starch in his linen, no gay furniture in his house; whether he talked through his nose, and showed the whites of his eyes; whether he named his children Assurance, Tribulation, or Maher-shalal-hash-baz—whether he avoided Spring Garden when in town, and abstained from hunting and hawking when in the country—whether he expounded hard scriptures to his troop of dragoons, and talked in a committee of ways and means about seeking the Lord. These were tests which could easily be applied. The misfortune was, that they were tests which proved nothing. Such as they were, they were employed by the dominant party. And the consequence was, that a crowd of impostors, in every walk of life, began to mimic and to caricature what were then regarded as the outward signs of sanctity. The

nation was not duped. The restraints of that gloomy time were such as would have been impatiently borne, if imposed by men who were universally believed to be saints. Those restraints became altogether insupportable when they were known to be kept up for the profit of hypocrites. It is quite certain that, even if the Royal Family had never returned—even if Richard Cromwell or Henry Cromwell had been at the head of the administration—there would have been a great relaxation of manners. Before the Revolution many signs indicated that a period of license was at hand. The Restoration crushed for a time the Puritan party, and placed supreme power in the hands of a libertine. The political counter-revolution assisted the moral counter-revolution, and was in turn assisted by it. A period of wild and desperate dissoluteness followed. Even in remote manor-houses and hamlets the change was in some degree felt; but in London the outbreak of debauchery was appalling. And in London the places most deeply infected were the palace, the quarters inhabited by the aristocracy, and the Inns of Court. It was on the support of these parts of the town that the playhouses depended. The character of the drama became conformed to the character of its patrons. The comic poet was the mouthpiece of the most deeply corrupted part of a corrupted society. And in the plays before us, we find distilled and condensed, the essential spirit of the fashionable world during the Anti-puritan reaction.

The Puritan had affected formality; the comic poet laughed at decorum. The Puritan had frowned at innocent diversions; the comic poet took under his patronage the most flagitious excesses. The Puritan had canted; the comic poet blasphemed. The Puritan had made an affair of gallantry felony, without benefit of clergy; the comic poet represented it as an honourable distinction. The

Puritan spoke with disdain of the low standard of popular morality; his life was regulated by a far more rigid code; his virtue was sustained by motives unknown to men of the world. Unhappily it had been amply proved in many cases, and might well be suspected in many more, that these high pretensions were unfounded. Accordingly, the fashionable circles, and the comic poets who were the spokesmen of those circles, took up the notion that all professions of piety and integrity were to be construed by the rule of contrary; that it might well be doubted whether there was such a thing as virtue in the world; but that, at all events, a person who affected to be better than his neighbours was sure to be a knave.

In the old drama there had been much that was reprehensible. But whoever compares even the least decorous plays of Fletcher with those contained in the volume before us, will see how much the profligacy which follows a period of overstrained austerity, goes beyond the profligacy which precedes such a period. The nation resembled the demoniac in the New Testament. The Puritans boasted that the unclean spirit was cast out. The house was empty, swept, and garnished, and for a time the expelled tenant wandered through dry places seeking rest and finding none. But the force of the exorcism was spent. The fiend returned to his abode; and returned not alone. He took to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself. They entered in, and dwelt together: and the second possession was worse than the first.

We will now, as far as our limits will permit, pass in review the writers to whom Mr. Leigh Hunt has introduced us. Of the four, Wycherley stands, we think, last in literary merit, but first in order of time, and first, beyond all doubt, in immorality.

William Wycherley was born in 1640. He was the

son of a Shropshire gentleman of old family, and of what was then accounted a good estate. The property was estimated at 600*l* a year, a fortune which, among the fortunes of that time, probably ranked as a fortune of 2000*l* a year would rank in our days.

William was an infant when the civil war broke out; and, while he was still in his rudiments, a presbyterian hierarchy and a republican government were established on the ruins of the ancient church and throne. Old Mr. Wycherley was attached to the royal cause, and was not disposed to intrust the education of his heir to the solemn Puritans who now ruled the universities and public Schools. Accordingly, the young gentleman was sent at fifteen to France. He resided some time in the neighbourhood of the Duke of Montausier, chief of one of the noblest races of Touraine. The duke's wife, a daughter of the house of Rambouillet, was a finished specimen of those talents and accomplishments for which her house was celebrated. The young foreigner was introduced to the splendid circle which surrounded the duchess, and there he appears to have learned some good and some evil. In a few years he returned to this country a fine gentleman and a Papist. His conversion, it may safely be affirmed, was the effect, not of any strong impression on his understanding or feelings, but partly of intercourse with an agreeable society in which the Church of Rome was the fashion; and partly of that aversion to Calvinistic austerities, which was then almost universal among young Englishmen of parts and spirit, and which, at one time, seemed likely to make one half of them Catholics, and the other half Atheists.

But the Restoration came. The universities were again in loyal hands; and there was reason to hope that there would be again a national church fit for a gentleman. Wycherley became a member of Queen's College, Oxford, and

abjured the errors of the Church of Rome. The somewhat equivocal glory of turning, for a short time, a very good-for-nothing Papist into a very good-for-nothing Protestant is ascribed to Bishop Barlow.

Wycherley left Oxford without taking a degree, and entered at the Temple, where he lived gaily for some years, observing the humours of the town, enjoying its pleasures, and picking up just as much law as was necessary to make the character of a pettifogging attorney, or a litigious client, entertaining in a comedy.

From an early age he had been in the habit of amusing himself by writing. Some wretched lines of his on the Restoration are still extant. Had he devoted himself to the making of verses, he would have been nearly as far below Tate and Blackmore as Tate and Blackmore are below Dryden. His only chance for renown would have been, that he might have occupied a niche, in a satire, between Flecknoe and Settle. There was, however, another kind of composition in which his talents and acquirements qualified him to succeed; and to that he judiciously betook himself.

In his old age he used to say, that he wrote "Love in a Wood" at nineteen, the "Gentleman Dancing-Master" at twenty-one, the "Plain Dealer" at twenty-five, and the "Country Wife" at one or two-and-thirty. We are incredulous, we own, as to the truth of this story. Nothing that we know of Wycherley, leads us to think him incapable of sacrificing truth to vanity. And his memory in the decline of his life played him such strange tricks, that we might question the correctness of his assertion, without throwing any imputation on his veracity. It is certain that none of his plays were acted till 1672, when he gave "Love in a Wood" to the public. It seems improbable that he should resolve on so important an occasion as that

of a first appearance before the world, to run his chance with a feeble piece, written before his talents were ripe, before his style was formed, before he had looked abroad into the world; and this when he had actually in his desk two highly-finished plays, the fruit of his matured powers. When we look minutely at the pieces themselves, we find in every part of them reason to suspect the accuracy of Wycherley's statement. In the first scene of "Love in a Wood," to go no further, we find many passages which he could not have written when he was nineteen. There is an allusion to gentlemen's periwigs, which first came into fashion in 1663; an allusion to guineas, which were first struck in 1663; an allusion to the vests which Charles ordered to be worn at court in 1666; an allusion to the fire of 1666; several allusions to political and ecclesiastical affairs which must be assigned to times later than the year of the Restoration—to times when the government and the city were opposed to each other, and when the Presbyterian ministers had been driven from the parish churches to the conventicles. But it is needless to dwell on particular expressions. The whole air and spirit of the piece belong to a period subsequent to that mentioned by Wycherley. As to the "Plain Dealer," which is said to have been written when he was twenty-five, it contains one scene unquestionably written after 1675, several which are later than 1668, and scarcely a line which can have been composed before the end of 1666.

Whatever may have been the age at which Wycherley composed his plays, it is certain that he did not bring them before the public till he was upwards of thirty. In 1672, "Love in a Wood" was acted with more success than it deserved, and this event produced a great change in the fortunes of the author. The Duchess of Cleveland cast her eyes upon him, and was pleased with his appearance.

This abandoned woman, not content with her complacent husband, and her royal keeper, lavished her fondness on a crowd of paramours of all ranks, from dukes to rope-dancers. In the time of the commonwealth, she commenced her career of gallantry; and terminated it under Anne, by marrying, when a great-grandmother, that worthless fop, Beau Fielding. It is not strange that she should have regarded Wycherley with favour. His figure was commanding, his countenance strikingly handsome, his look and deportment full of grace and dignity. He had, as Pope said long after, "the true nobleman look;" the look which seems to indicate superiority, and a not unbecoming consciousness of superiority. His hair, indeed, as he says in one of his poems, was prematurely gray. But in that age of periwigs, this misfortune was of little importance. The Duchess admired him, and proceeded to make love to him, after the fashion of the coarse-minded and shameless circle to which she belonged. In the Ring, when the crowd of beauties and fine gentlemen was thickest, she put her head out of her coach-window, and bawled to him—"Sir, you are a rascal; you are a villain;" and, if she be not belied, added another phrase of abuse which we will not quote, but of which we may say, that it might most justly have been applied to her own children. Wycherley called on her grace the next day, and with great humility begged to know in what way he had been so unfortunate as to disoblige her. Thus began an intimacy from which the poet probably expected wealth and honours. Nor were such expectations unreasonable. A handsome young fellow about the court, known by the name of Jack Churchill, was, about the same time, so lucky as to become the object of a short-lived fancy of the Duchess. She had presented him with £4500; the price, in all probability, of some title or some pardon. The prudent youth had lent

the money on high interest, and on landed security; and this judicious investment was the beginning of the most splendid private fortune in Europe. Wycherley was not so lucky. The partiality with which the great lady regarded him, was indeed the talk of the whole town; and sixty years later, old men who remembered those days, told Voltaire that she often stole from the court to her lover's chambers in the Temple, disguised like a country girl, with a straw-hat on her head, pattens on her feet, and a basket in her hand. The poet was indeed too happy and proud to be discreet. He dedicated to the Duchess the play which had led to their acquaintance, and in the dedication expressed himself in terms which could not but confirm the reports which had gone abroad. But at Whitehall such an affair was regarded in no serious light. The lady was not afraid to bring Wycherley to court, and to introduce him to a splendid society, with which, as far as appears, he had never before mixed. The easy king, who allowed to his mistresses the same liberty which he claimed for himself, was pleased with the conversation and manners of his new rival.

So high did Wycherley stand in the royal favour, that once, when he was confined by a fever to his lodgings in Bow-street, Charles, who, with all his faults, was certainly a man of a social and affable disposition, called on him, sat by his bed, advised him to try change of air, and gave him a handsome sum of money to defray the expense of the journey. Buckingham, then master of the horse, and one of that infamous ministry known by the name of the Cabal, had been one of the Duchess's innumerable paramours. He at first showed some symptoms of jealousy; but soon, after his fashion, veered round from anger to fondness, and gave Wycherley a commission in his own regiment, and a place in the royal household.

It would be unjust to Wycherley's memory not to mention here the only good action, as far as we know, of his whole life. He is said to have made great exertions to obtain the patronage of Buckingham for the illustrious author of "Hudibras," who was now sinking into an obscure grave, neglected by a nation proud of his genius, and by a Court which he had served too well. His Grace consented to see poor Butler; and an appointment was made. But unhappily two pretty women passed by; the volatile Duke ran after them; the opportunity was lost, and could never be regained.

The second Dutch war, the most disgraceful war in the whole history of England, was now raging. It was not in that age considered as by any means necessary that a naval officer should receive a professional education. Young men of rank, who were hardly able to keep their feet in a breeze, served on board of the king's ships, sometimes with commissions and sometimes as volunteers. Mulgrave, Dorset, Rochester, and many others, left the playhouses and the Mall for hammocks and salt pork; and, ignorant as they were of the rudiments of naval science, showed, at least on the day of battle, the courage which is seldom wanting in an English gentleman. All good judges of maritime affairs complained that, under this system, the ships were grossly mismanaged; and that the tarpaulins contracted the vices, without acquiring the graces, of the court. But on this subject, as on every other, the government of Charles was deaf to all remonstrances where the interests or whims of favourites were concerned. Wycherley did not choose to be out of the fashion. He embarked, was present at a battle, and celebrated it, on his return, in a copy of verses too bad for the bellman.*

* Mr. Leigh Hunt supposes that the battle at which Wycherley

About the same time he brought on the stage his second piece, the "Gentleman Dancing-Master." The biographer says nothing, as far as we remember, about the fate of this play. There is, however, reason to believe, that, though certainly far superior to "Love in a Wood," it was not equally successful. It was first tried at the west end of the town, and, as the poet confessed, "would scarce do there." It was then performed in Salisbury Court, but, as it should seem, with no better event. For, in the prologue to the "Country Wife," Wycherley described himself as "the late so baffled scribbler."

In 1675, the "Country Wife" was performed with brilliant success, which, in a literary point of view, was not wholly unmerited. For, though one of the most profligate and heartless of human compositions, it is the elaborate production of a mind, not indeed rich, original, or imaginative, but ingenious, observant, quick to seize hints, and patient of the toil of polishing.

was present, was that which the Duke of York gained over Opdam, in 1665. We believe that it was one of the battles between Rupert and De Ruyter, in 1673.

The point is of no importance; and there can scarcely be said to be any evidence either way. We offer, however, to Mr. Leigh Hunt's consideration three arguments—of no great weight certainly—yet such as ought, we think, to prevail in the absence of better. First, it is not very likely that a young Templar, quite unknown in the world—and Wycherley was such in 1665—should have quitted his chambers to go to sea. On the other hand, it would have been in the regular course of things, that, when a courtier and an equerry, he should offer his services. Secondly, his verses appear to have been written after a drawn battle, like those of 1673, and not after a complete victory, like that of 1665. Thirdly, in the epilogue to the "Gentleman Dancing-Master," written in 1673, he says, that "all gentlemen must pack to sea;" an expression which makes it probable that he did not himself mean to stay behind.

The "Plain Dealer," equally immoral and equally well written, appeared in 1677. At first this piece pleased the people less than the critics; but after a time its unquestionable merits, and the zealous support of Lord Dorset, whose influence in literary and fashionable society was unbounded, established it in the public favour.

The fortune of Wycherley was now in the zenith, and began to decline. A long life was still before him. But it was destined to be filled with nothing but shame and wretchedness, domestic dissensions, literary failures, and pecuniary embarrassments.

The king, who was looking about for an accomplished man to conduct the education of his natural son, the young Duke of Richmond, at length fixed on Wycherley. The poet, exulting in his good luck, went down to amuse himself at Tunbridge; looked into a bookseller's shop on the Pantiles, and to his great delight, heard a handsome woman ask for the "Plain Dealer," which had just been published. He made acquaintance with the lady, who proved to be the Countess of Drogheda, a gay young widow, with an ample jointure. She was charmed with his person and his wit; and, after a short flirtation, agreed to become his wife. Wycherley seems to have been apprehensive that this connection might not suit well with the king's plan respecting the Duke of Richmond. He accordingly prevailed on the lady to consent to a private marriage. All came out. Charles thought the conduct of Wycherley both disrespectful and disingenuous. Other causes probably assisted to alienate the sovereign from the subject who had been so highly favoured. Buckingham was now in opposition, and had been committed to the Tower; not as Mr. Leigh Hunt supposes, on a charge of treason, but by an order of the House of Lords for some expressions which he had used in debate. Wycherley wrote some bad lines in praise of his

imprisoned patron, which, if they came to the knowledge of the king, would certainly have made his majesty very angry. The favour of the court was completely withdrawn from the poet. An amiable woman, with a large fortune, might indeed have been an ample compensation for the loss. But Lady Drogheda was ill-tempered, imperious, and extravagantly jealous. She had herself been a maid of honour at Whitehall. She well knew in what estimation conjugal fidelity was held among the fine gentlemen there; and watched her town husband as assiduously as Mr. Pinchwife watched his country wife. The unfortunate wit was, indeed, allowed to meet his friends at a tavern opposite to his own house. But on such occasions the windows were always open, in order that her ladyship, who was posted on the other side of the street, might be satisfied that no woman was of the party.

The death of Lady Drogheda released the unfortunate poet from this distress; but a series of disasters, in rapid succession, broke down his health, his spirits, and his fortune. His wife meant to leave him a good property, and left him only a lawsuit. His father could not or would not assist him. He was at length thrown into the Fleet, and languished there during seven years utterly forgotten, as it should seem, by the gay and lively circle of which he had been a distinguished ornament. In the extremity of his distress he implored the publisher who had been enriched by the sale of his works, to lend him twenty pounds, and was refused. His comedies, however, still kept possession of the stage, and drew great audiences, which troubled themselves little about the situation of the author. At length, James the Second, who had now succeeded to the throne, happened to go to the theatre on an evening when the "Plain Dealer" was acted. He was pleased by the performance, and touched by the fate of the writer, whom he

probably remembered as one of the gayest and handsomest of his brother's courtiers. The King determined to pay Wycherley's debts, and to settle on the unfortunate poet a pension of £200 a year. This munificence, on the part of a prince who was little in the habit of rewarding literary merit, and whose whole soul was devoted to the interests of his church, raises in us a surmise which Mr. Leigh Hunt will, we fear, pronounce very uncharitable. We cannot help suspecting that it was at this time that Wycherley returned to the communion of the Church of Rome. That he did return to the communion of the Church of Rome is certain. The date of his re-conversion, as far as we know, has never been mentioned by any biographer. We believe that, if we place it at this time, we do no injustice to the character either of Wycherley or James.

Not long after, old Mr. Wycherley died; and his son, now past the middle of life, came to the family estate. Still, however, he was not at his ease. His embarrassments were great; his property was strictly tied up; and he was on very bad terms with the heir-at-law. He appears to have led, during a long course of years, that most wretched life, the life of an old boy about town. Expensive tastes with little money, and licentious appetites with declining vigour, were the just penance for his early irregularities. A severe illness had produced a singular effect on his intellect. His memory played him pranks stranger than almost any that are to be found in the history of that strange faculty. It seemed to be at once preternaturally strong and preternaturally weak. If a book was read to him before he went to bed, he would wake the next morning with his mind full of the thoughts and expressions which he had heard over night; and he would write them down, without in the least suspecting that they were not his own. In his verses the same ideas, and even the same words came over and over

again several times in a short composition. His fine person bore the marks of age, sickness, and sorrow; and he mourned for his departed beauty with an effeminate regret. He could not look without a sigh at the portrait which Lely had painted of him when he was only twenty-eight; and often murmured *Quantum mutatus ab illo*. He was still nervously anxious about his literary reputation; and, not content with the fame which he still possessed as a dramatist, was determined to be renowned as a satirist and an amatory poet.

In 1704, after twenty-seven years of silence, he again appeared as an author. He put forth a large folio of miscellaneous verses, which, we believe, has never been reprinted. Some of these pieces had probably circulated through the town in manuscript. For, before the volume appeared, the critics at the coffee-houses very confidently predicted that it would be utterly worthless; and were in consequence bitterly reviled by the poet in an ill-written, foolish, and egotistical preface. The book amply vindicated the most unfavourable prophecies that had been hazarded. The style and versification are beneath criticism; the morals are those of Rochester. For Rochester, indeed, there was some excuse. When his offences against decorum were committed, he was a very young man, misled by a prevailing fashion. Wycherley was sixty-four. He had long outlived the times when libertinism was regarded as essential to the character of a wit and a gentleman. Most of the rising poets, like Addison, John Philips, and Rowe, were studious of decency. We can hardly conceive anything more miserable than the figure which the ribald old man makes in the midst of so many sober and well-conducted youths.

In the very year in which this bulky volume of obscene doggerel was published, Wycherley formed an acquaint-

ance of a very singular kind. A little, pale, crooked, sickly, bright-eyed urchin, just turned of sixteen, had written some copies of verses, in which discerning judges could detect the promise of future eminence. There was, indeed, as yet nothing very striking or original in the conceptions of the young poet. But he was already skilled in the art of metrical composition. His diction and his music were not those of the great old masters; but that which his ablest contemporaries were labouring to do, he already did best. His style was not richly poetical; but it was always neat, compact, and pointed. His verse wanted variety of pause, of swell, and of cadence; but it never grated on the ear by a harsh turn, or disappointed it by a feeble close. The youth was already free of the company of wits, and was greatly elated at being introduced to the author of the "Plain Dealer" and the "Country Wife."

It is curious to trace the history of the intercourse which took place between Wycherley and Pope—between the representative of the age that was going out, and the representative of the age that was coming in—between the friend of Rochester and Buckingham, and the friend of Lyttleton and Mansfield. At first the boy was enchanted by the kindness and condescension of his new friend, haunted his door, and followed him about like a spaniel, from coffee-house to coffee-house. Letters full of affection, humility, and fulsome flattery were interchanged between the friends. But the first ardour of affection could not last. Pope, though at no time scrupulously delicate in his writings, or fastidious as to the morals of his associates, was shocked by the indecency of a rake who, at seventy, was still the representative of the monstrous profligacy of the Restoration. As he grew older, as his mind expanded and his fame rose, he appreciated both himself and Wycherley more justly. He felt a well-founded contempt for the old

gentleman's verses, and was at no great pains to conceal his opinion. Wycherley, on the other hand, though blinded by self-love to the imperfections of what he called his poetry, could not but see that there was an immense difference between his young companion's rhymes and his own. He was divided between two feelings. He wished to have the assistance of so skilful a hand to polish his lines; and yet he shrank from the humiliation of being beholden for literary assistance to a lad who might have been his grandson. Pope was willing to give assistance; but was by no means disposed to give assistance and flattery too. He took the trouble to retouch whole reams of feeble stumbling verses, and inserted many vigorous lines, which the least skilful reader will distinguish in an instant. But he thought that by these services he acquired a right to express himself in terms which would not, under ordinary circumstances, become a youth when addressing a man of four times his age. In one letter, he tells Wycherley that "the worst pieces are such as, to render them very good, would require almost the entire new writing of them." In another he gives the following account of his corrections:— "Though the whole be as short again as at first, there is not one thought omitted but what is a repetition of something in your first volume, or in this very paper; and the versification throughout is, I believe, such as nobody can be shocked at. The repeated permission you give me of dealing freely with you, will, I hope, excuse what I have done; for, if I have not spared you when I thought severity would do you a kindness, I have not mangled you where I thought there was no absolute need of amputation." Wycherley continued to return thanks for all this hacking and hewing; which was, indeed, of inestimable service to his compositions. But by degrees his thanks began to sound very like reproaches. In private, he is said to have described Pope

as a person who could not cut out a suit, but who had some skill in turning old coats. In his letter to Pope, while he acknowledged that the versification of his poems had been greatly improved, he spoke of the whole art of versification with scorn, and sneered at those who preferred sound to sense. Pope revenged himself for this outbreak of spleen by return of post. He had in his hands a volume of Wycherley's rhymes, and he wrote to say that this volume was so full of faults that he could not correct it without completely defacing the manuscript. "I am," he said, "equally afraid of sparing you, and of offending you by too impudent a correction." This was more than flesh and blood could bear: Wycherley reclaimed his papers, in a letter in which resentment shows itself plainly through the thin disguise of civility. Pope, glad to be rid of a troublesome and inglorious task, sent back the deposit; and, by way of a parting courtesy, advised the old man to turn his poetry into prose, and assured him that the public would like his thoughts much better without his versification. Thus ended this memorable correspondence.

Wycherley lived some years after the termination of the strange friendship which we have described. The last scene of his life was, perhaps, the most scandalous. Ten days before his death, at seventy-five, he married a young girl, merely in order to injure his nephew—an act which proves that neither years, nor adversity, nor what he called his philosophy, nor either of the religions which he had at different times professed, had taught him the rudiments of morality. He died in December, 1715, and lies in the vaul under the church of St. Paul in Covent-Garden.

His bride soon after married a Captain Shrimpton, who thus became possessed of a large collection of manuscripts. These were sold to a bookseller. They were so full of erasures and interlineations that no printer could decipher

them. It was necessary to call in the aid of a professed critic; and Theobald, the editor of Shakspeare, and the hero of the first Dunciad, was employed to ascertain the true reading. In this way a volume of miscellanies in verse and prose was got up for the market. The collection derives all its value from the traces of Pope's hand, which are everywhere discernible.

Of the moral character of Wycherley it can hardly be necessary for us to say more. His fame as a writer rests wholly on his comedies, and chiefly on the last two. Even as a comic writer, he was neither of the best school, nor highest in his school. He was in truth a worse Congreve. His chief merit, like Congreve, lies in the style of his dialogue. But the wit which lights up the "Plain Dealer" and the "Country Wife" is pale and flickering, when compared with the gorgeous blaze which dazzles us almost to blindness in "Love for Love" and the "Way of the World." Like Congreve—and, indeed, even more than Congreve—Wycherley is ready to sacrifice dramatic propriety to the liveliness of his dialogue. The poet speaks out of the mouths of all his dunces and coxcombs, and makes them describe themselves with a good sense and acuteness which puts them on a level with the wits and heroes. We will give two instances, the first which occur to us, from the "Country Wife." There are to be found in the world fools who find the society of old friends insipid, and who are always running after new companions. Such a character is a fair subject for comedy. But nothing can be more absurd than to introduce a man of this sort saying to his comrade—"I can deny you nothing; for though I have known thee a great while, never go if I do not love thee as well as a new acquaintance." That town-wits, again, have always been rather a heartless class, is true. But none of them, we will answer for it, ever said

to a young lady to whom he was making love—"We wits rail and make love often but to show our parts: as we have no affections, so we have no malice."

Wycherley's plays are said to have been the produce of long and patient labour. The epithet of "slow" was early given to him by Rochester, and was frequently repeated. In truth, his mind, unless we are greatly mistaken, was naturally a very meagre soil, and was forced only by great labour and outlay to bear fruit, which, after all, was not of the highest flavour. He has scarcely more claim to originality than Terence. It is not too much to say, that there is hardly anything of the least value in his plays, of which the hint is not to be found elsewhere. The best scenes in the "Gentleman Dancing-Master," were suggested by Calderon's *Maestro de Danzar*, not by any means one of the happiest comedies of the great Castilian poet. The "Country Wife" is borrowed from the *Ecole des Maris* and the *Ecole des Femmes*. The groundwork of the "Plain Dealer" is taken from the *Misanthrope* of Molière. One whole scene is almost translated from the *Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes;* Fidelia is Shakspeare's Viola stolen, and marred in the stealing; and the Widow Blackacre, beyond comparison Wycherley's best comic character, is the Countess in Racine's *Plaideurs*, talking the jargon of English instead of that of French chicane.

The only thing original about Wycherley—the only thing which he could furnish from his own mind in inexhaustible abundance—was profligacy. It is curious to observe how everything that he touched, however pure and noble, took in an instant the colour of his own mind. Compare the *Ecole des Femmes* with the "Country Wife." Agnes is a simple and amiable girl, whose heart is indeed full of love, but of love sanctioned by honour, morality, and religion. Her natural talents are great. They have been hidden, and,

as it might appear, destroyed by an education elaborately bad. But they are called forth into full energy by a virtuous passion. Her lover, while he adores her beauty, is too honest a man to abuse the confiding tenderness of a creature so charming and inexperienced. Wycherley takes this plot into his hands; and forthwith this sweet and graceful courtship becomes a licentious intrigue of the lowest and least sentimental kind, between an impudent London rake and the idiot wife of a country squire. We will not go into details. In truth, Wycherley's indecency is protected against the critics as a skunk is protected against the hunters. It is safe, because it is too filthy to handle, and too noisome even to approach.

It is the same with the "Plain Dealer." How careful has Shakspeare been in "Twelfth Night," to preserve the dignity and delicacy of Viola, under her disguise! Even when wearing a page's doublet and hose, she is never mixed up with any transaction which the most fastidious mind could regard as leaving a stain on her. She is employed by the Duke on an embassy of love to Olivia; but on an embassy of the most honourable kind. Wycherley borrows Viola—and Viola forthwith becomes a pander of the basest sort. But the character of Manly is the best illustration of our meaning. Molière exhibited in his misanthrope a pure and noble mind, which had been sorely vexed by the sight of perfidy and malevolence, disguised under the forms of politeness. As every extreme naturally generates its contrary, Alceste adopts a standard of good and evil directly opposed to that of the society which surrounds him. Courtesy seems to him a vice; and those stern virtues which are neglected by the fops and coquettes of Paris, become too exclusively the objects of his veneration. He is often to blame; he is often ridiculous; but he is always a good man; and the feeling which he inspires is regret that a person so

estimable should be so unamiable. Wycherley borrowed Alceste, and turned him—we quote the words of so lenient a critic as Mr. Leigh Hunt—into "a ferocious sensualist, who believed himself as great a rascal as he thought everybody else." The surliness of Molière's hero is copied and caricatured. But the most nauseous libertinism, and the most dastardly fraud, are substituted for the purity and integrity of the original. And, to make the whole complete, Wycherley does not seem to have been aware that he was not drawing the portrait of an eminently honest man. So depraved was his moral taste, that, while he firmly believed he was producing a picture of virtue too exalted for the commerce of this world, he was really delineating the greatest rascal that is to be found, even in his own writings.

We pass a very severe censure on Wycherley, when we say that it is a relief to turn from him to Congreve. Congreve's writings, indeed, are by no means pure, nor was he, as far as we are able to judge, a warm-hearted or high-minded man. Yet, in coming to him, we feel that the worst is over—that we are one remove further from the Restoration—that we are past the Nadir of national taste and morality.

William Congreve was born in 1670,* at Bardsey, in the neighbourhood of Leeds. His father, a younger son of a very ancient Staffordshire family, had distinguished himself among the cavaliers in the civil war, was set down after the Restoration for the Order of the Royal Oak, and subsequently settled in Ireland, under the patronage of the Earl of Burlington.

Congreve passed his childhood and youth in Ireland. He was sent to school at Kilkenny, and thence went to the

* Mr. Leigh Hunt says 1669. But the Old Style has misled him.

University of Dublin. His learning does great honour to his instructors. From his writings it appears, not only that he was well acquainted with Latin literature, but that his knowledge of the Greek poets was such as was not, in his time, common even in a college.

When he had completed his academical studies, he was sent to London to study the law, and was entered of the Middle Temple. He troubled himself, however, very little about pleading or conveyancing; and gave himself up to literature and society. Two kinds of ambition early took possession of his mind, and often pulled it in opposite directions. He was conscious of great fertility of thought, and power of ingenious combination. His lively conversation, his polished manners, and his highly respectable connections, had obtained for him ready access to the best company. He longed to be a great writer. He longed to be a man of fashion. Either object was within his reach. But could he secure both? Was there not something vulgar in letters—something inconsistent with the easy apathetic graces of a man of the mode? Was it aristocratical to be confounded with creatures who lived in the cocklofts of Grub Street, to bargain with publishers, to hurry printers' devils, to squabble with managers, to be applauded or hissed by pit, boxes, and galleries? Could he forego the renown of being the first wit of his age? Could he attain that renown without sullying what he valued quite as much—his character for gentility? The history of his life is the history of a conflict between these two impulses. In his youth the desire of literary fame had the mastery; but soon the meaner ambition overpowered the higher, and obtained supreme dominion over his mind.

His first work, a novel of no great value, he published under the assumed name of "Cleophil." His second was the "Old Bachelor," acted in 1693, a play inferior indeed

to his other comedies, but, in its own line, inferior to them alone. The plot is equally destitute of interest and of probability. The characters are either not distinguishable, or are distinguished only by peculiarities of the most glaring kind. But the dialogue is resplendent with wit and eloquence—which indeed are so abundant that the fools come in for an ample share—and yet preserves a certain colloquial air, a certain indescribable ease, of which Wycherley had given no example, and which Sheridan in vain attempted to imitate. The author, divided between pride and shame—pride at having written a good play, and shame at having done an ungentlemanlike thing—pretended that he had merely scribbled a few scenes for his own amusement, and affected to yield unwillingly to the importunities of those who pressed him to try his fortune on the stage. The "Old Bachelor" was seen in manuscript by Dryden; one of whose best qualities was a hearty and generous admiration for the talents of others. He declared that he had never seen such a first play; and lent his services to bring it into a form fit for representation. Nothing was wanting to the success of the piece. It was so cast as to bring into play all the comic talent, and to exhibit on the boards in one view all the beauty which Drury Lane Theatre, then the only theatre in London, could assemble. The result was a complete triumph; and the author was gratified with rewards more substantial than the applauses of the pit. Montagu, then a lord of the treasury, immediately gave him a place, and, in a short time, added the reversion of another place of much greater value, which, however, did not become vacant till many years had elapsed.

In 1694, Congreve brought out the "Double-Dealer," a comedy in which all the powers which had produced the "Old Bachelor" show themselves, matured by time and improved by exercise. But the audience was shocked by

the characters of Maskwell and Lady Touchwood. And, indeed, there is something strangely revolting in the way in which a group that seems to belong to the house of Laius or of Pelops, is introduced into the midst of the Brisks, Froths, Carelesses, and Plyants. The play was unfavourably received. Yet, if the praise of distinguished men could compensate an author for the disapprobation of the multitude, Congreve had no reason to repine. Dryden, in one of the most ingenious, magnificent, and pathetic pieces that he ever wrote, extolled the author of the "Double-Dealer" in terms which now appear extravagantly hyperbolical. Till Congreve came forth—so ran this exquisite flattery—the superiority of the poets who preceded the civil wars was acknowledged.

"Theirs was the giant race before the flood."

Since the return of the Royal house, much art and ability had been exerted, but the old masters had been still unrivalled.

"Our builders were with want of genius curst,
The second temple was not like the first."

At length a writer had arisen who, just emerging from boyhood, had surpassed the authors of the "Knight of the Burning Pestle," and the "Silent Woman," and who had only one rival left to contend with.

"Heaven, that but once was prodigal before,
To Shakspeare gave as much, he could not give him more."

Some lines near the end of the poem are singularly graceful and touching, and sank deep into the heart of Congreve.

"Already am I worn with cares and age,
And just abandoning the ungrateful stage;

> But you, whom every Muse and Grace adorn,
> Whom I foresee to better fortune born,
> Be kind to my remains; and, oh, defend
> Against your judgment your departed friend;
> Let not the insulting foe my fame pursue,
> But guard those laurels which descend to you."

The crowd, as usual, gradually came over to the opinion of the men of note; and the "Double-Dealer" was before long quite as much admired, though perhaps never so much liked as the "Old Bachelor."

In 1695 appeared "Love for Love," superior both in wit and in scenic effect to either of the preceding plays. It was performed at a new theatre which Betterton and some other actors, disgusted by the treatment which they received in Drury Lane, just opened in a tennis-court near Lincoln's Inn. Scarcely any comedy within the memory of the oldest man had been equally successful. The actors were so elated that they gave Congreve a share in their theatre, and he promised, in return, to furnish them with a play every year, if his health would permit. Two years passed, however, before he produced the "Mourning Bride;" a play which, paltry as it is when compared, we do not say with Lear or Macbeth, but with the best dramas of Massinger and Ford, stands very high among the tragedies of the age in which it was written. To find anything so good we must go twelve years back to "Venice Preserved" or six years forward to the "Fair Penitent." The noble passage which Johnson, in writing and in conversation, extolled above any other in the English drama, has suffered greatly in the public estimation from the extravagance of his praise. Had he contented himself with saying that it was finer than anything in the tragedies of Dryden, Otway, Lee, Rowe, Southern, Hughes, and Addison—than anything, in short,

that had been written for the stage since the time of Charles the First—he would not have been in the wrong.

The success of the "Mourning Bride" was even greater than that of "Love for Love." Congreve was now allowed to be the first tragic, as well as the first comic dramatist of his time; and all this at twenty-seven. We believe that no English writer except Lord Byron, has, at so early an age, stood so high in the estimation of his contemporaries.

At this time took place an event which deserves, in our opinion, a very different sort of notice from that which has been bestowed on it by Mr. Leigh Hunt. The nation had now nearly recovered from the demoralising effect of the Puritan austerity. The gloomy follies of the reign of the Saints were but faintly remembered. The evils produced by profaneness and debauchery were recent and glaring. The Court, since the Revolution, had ceased to patronise licentiousness. Mary was strictly pious; and the vices of the cold, stern, and silent William, were not obtruded on the public eye. Discountenanced by the government, and falling in the favour of the people, the profligacy of the Restoration still maintained its ground in some parts of society. Its strongholds were the places where men of wit and fashion congregated, and above all, the theatres. At this conjuncture arose a great reformer, whom, widely as we differ from him in many important points, we can never mention without respect.

Jeremy Collier was a clergyman of the Church of England, bred at Cambridge. His talents and attainments were such as might have been expected to raise him to the highest honours of his profession. He had an extensive knowledge of books, and yet he had mingled with polite society, and is said not to have wanted either grace or vivacity in conversation. There were few branches of literature to

which he had not paid some attention. But ecclesiastical antiquity was his favourite study. In religious opinions he belonged to that section of the Church of England which lies furthest from Geneva and nearest to Rome. His notions touching Episcopal government, holy orders, the efficacy of the sacraments, the authority of the Fathers, the guilt of schism, the importance of vestments, ceremonies, and solemn days, differed little from those which are now held by Dr. Pusey and Mr. Newman. Towards the close of his life, indeed, Collier took some steps which brought him still nearer to Popery—mixed water with the wine in the Eucharist, made the sign of the cross in confirmation, employed oil in the visitation of the sick, and offered up prayers for the dead. His politics were of a piece with his divinity. He was a Tory of the highest sort, such as in the cant of that age was called a Tantivy. Not even the tyranny of James, not even the persecution of the bishops and the spoliation of the universities, could shake that steady loyalty. While the Convention was sitting, Collier wrote with vehemence in defence of the fugitive king, and was in consequence arrested. But his dauntless spirit was not to be so tamed. He refused to take the oaths, renounced all his preferments, and, in a succession of pamphlets written with much violence and with some ability, attempted to excite the nation against its new masters. In 1692, he was again arrested on suspicion of having been concerned in a treasonable plot. So unbending were his principles that his friends could hardly persuade him to let them bail him; and he afterwards expressed his remorse for having been induced thus to acknowledge, by implication, the authority of an usurping government. He was soon in trouble again. Sir John Friend and Sir William Parkins were tried and convicted of high treason for planning the murder of King William. Collier administered spiritual consolation to them,

attended them to Tyburn, and just before the executioner laid his hands on their heads, and by the authority which he derived from Christ, solemnly absolved them. This scene gave indescribable scandal. Tories joined with Whigs in blaming the conduct of the daring priest. There are, it was said, some acts which fall under the definition of treason into which a good man may, in troubled times, be led even by his virtues. It may be necessary for the protection of society to punish such a man. But even in punishing him we consider him as legally rather than morally guilty, and hope that his honest error, though it cannot be pardoned here, will not be counted to him for sin hereafter. But such was not the case of Collier's penitents. They were concerned in a plot for waylaying and butchering, in an hour of security, one who, whether he were or were not their king, was at all events their fellow-creature. Whether the Jacobite theory about the rights of governments, and the duties of subjects, were or were not well founded, assassination must always be considered as a great crime. It is condemned even by the maxims of worldly honour and morality. Much more must it be an object of abhorrence to the pure Spouse of Christ. The Church cannot surely, without the saddest and most mournful forebodings, see one of her children who has been guilty of this great wickedness, pass into eternity without any sign of repentance. That these traitors had given any sign of repentance was not alleged. It might be that they had privately declared their contrition; and, if so, the minister of religion might be justified in privately assuring them of the Divine forgiveness. But a public remission ought to have been preceded by a public atonement. The regret of these men, if expressed at all, had been expressed in secret. The hands of Collier had been laid on them in the presence of thousands. The inference which his enemies drew from his conduct

was, that he did not consider the conspiracy against the life of William as sinful. But this inference he very vehemently, and, we doubt not, very sincerely denied.

The storm raged. The bishops put forth a solemn censure of the absolution. The Attorney-General brought the matter before the Court of King's Bench. Collier had now made up his mind not to give bail for his appearance before any court which derived its authority from the usurper. He accordingly absconded, and was outlawed. He survived these events about thirty years. The prosecution was not pressed, and he was soon suffered to resume his literary pursuits in quiet. At a later period, many attempts were made to shake his perverse integrity by offers of wealth and dignity, but in vain. When he died, towards the end of the reign of George I., he was still under the ban of the law.

We shall not be suspected of regarding either the politics or the theology of Collier with partiality; but we believe him to have been as honest and courageous a man as ever lived. We will go further, and say that, though passionate and often wrong-headed, he was a singularly fair controversialist—candid, generous, too high-spirited to take mean advantages even in the most exciting disputes, and pure from all taint of personal malevolence. It must also be admitted that his opinions on ecclesiastical and political affairs, though in themselves absurd and pernicious, eminently qualified him to be the reformer of our lighter literature. The libertinism of the press and of the stage, was, as we have said, the effect of the reaction against the puritan strictness. Profligacy was, like the oak leaf on the twenty-ninth of May, the badge of a cavalier and a high-churchman. Decency was associated with conventicles and calves' head. Grave prelates were too much disposed to wink at the excesses of a body of zealous and able allies, who

covered Roundheads and Presbyterians with ridicule. If a Whig raised his voice against the impiety and licentiousness of the fashionable writers, his mouth was instantly stopped by the retort—You are one of those who groan at a light quotation from Scripture, and raise estates out of the plunder of the Church,—who shudder at a *double entendre*, and chop off the heads of kings. A Baxter, a Burnet, even a Tillotson, would have done little to purify our literature. But when a man, fanatical in the cause of episcopacy, and actually under outlawry for his attachment to hereditary right, came forward as the champion of decency, the battle was already half won.

In 1698, Collier published his "Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage," a book which threw the whole literary world into commotion, but which is now much less read than it deserves. The faults of the work, indeed, are neither few nor small. The dissertations on the Greek and Latin Drama do not at all help the argument; and, whatever may have been thought of them by the generation which fancied that Christ Church had refuted Bentley, are such as, in the present day, a scholar of very humble pretensions may venture to pronounce boyish, or rather babyish. The censures are not sufficiently discriminating. The authors whom Collier accused had been guilty of such gross sins against decency, that he was certain to weaken, instead of strengthening his case, by introducing into his charge against them any matter about which there could be the smallest dispute. He was, however, so injudicious as to place among the outrageous offences, which he justly arraigned, some things which are really quite innocent; and some slight instances of levity, which, though not perhaps strictly correct, could easily be paralleled from the works of writers who had rendered great services to morality and religion. Thus he blames Congreve, the num-

ber and gravity of whose real transgressions made it quite unnecessary to tax him with any that were not real, for using the words "martyr" and "inspiration" in a light sense; as if an archbishop might not say that a speech was inspired by claret, or that an alderman was a martyr to the gout. Sometimes, again, Collier does not sufficiently distinguish between the dramatist and the persons of the drama. Thus he blames Vanbrugh for putting into Lord Foppington's mouth some raillery on the Church service; though it is obvious that Vanbrugh could not better express reverence than by making Lord Foppington express contempt. There is also throughout the "Short View" too strong a display of professional feeling. Collier is not content with claiming for his order an immunity from insult and indiscriminate scurrility; he will not allow that, in any case, any word or act of a divine can be a proper subject for ridicule. Nor does he confine this benefit of clergy to the ministers of the Established Church; he extends the privilege to Catholic priests, and, what in him is more surprising, to Dissenting preachers. This, however, is a mere trifle. Imauns, Brahmins, priests of Jupiter, priests of Baal, are all to be held sacred. Dryden is blamed for making the Mufti in "Don Sebastian" talk nonsense. Lee is called to a severe account for his incivility to Tiresias. But the most curious passage is that in which Collier resents some uncivil reflections thrown by Cassandra, in "Cleomenes," on the calf Apis and his hierophants. The words, "grass-eating, foddered god,"—words which really are much in the style of several passages in the Old Testament, give as much offence to this Christian divine as they could have given to the priests at Memphis.

But, when all these deductions have been made, great merit must be allowed to this work. There is hardly any book of that time from which it would be possible to select

specimens of writing so excellent and so various. To compare Collier with Pascal would indeed be absurd. Yet we hardly know where, except in the "Provincial Letters," we can find mirth so harmoniously and becomingly blended with solemnity as in the "Short View." In truth, all the modes of ridicule, from broad fun to polished and antithetical sarcasm, were at Collier's command. On the other hand, he was complete master of the rhetoric of honest indignation. We scarcely know any volume which contains so many bursts of that peculiar eloquence which comes from the heart, and goes to the heart. Indeed, the spirit of the book is truly heroic. In order fairly to appreciate it, we must remember the situation in which the writer stood. He was under the frown of power. His name was already a mark for the invectives of one half of the writers of the age; when, in the cause of good taste, good sense, and good morals, he gave battle to the other half. Strong as his political prejudices were, he seems on this occasion to have entirely laid them aside. He has forgotten that he was a Jacobite, and remembers only that he is a citizen and a Christian. Some of his sharpest censures are directed against poetry which had been hailed with delight by the Tory party, and had inflicted a deep wound on the Whigs. It is really inspiriting to see how gallantly the solitary outlaw advances to attack enemies, formidable separately, and it might have been thought, irresistible when combined—distributes his swashing blows right and left among Wycherley, Congreve, and Vanbrugh—treads the wretched D'Urfey down in the dirt beneath his feet—and strikes with all his strength full at the towering crest of Dryden.

The effect produced by the "Short View" was immense. The nation was on the side of Collier. But it could not be doubted that, in the great host which he had defied,

some champion would be found to lift the gauntlet. The general belief was, that Dryden would take the field; and all the wits anticipated a sharp contest between two well-paired combatants. The great poet had been singled out in the most marked manner. It was well known that he was deeply hurt, that much smaller provocations had formerly roused him to violent resentment, and that there was no literary weapon, offensive or defensive, of which he was not master. But his conscience smote him; he stood abashed, like the fallen archangel at the rebuke of Zephon,

> "And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
> Virtue in her shape how lovely; saw and pined
> His loss."

At a later period he mentioned the "Short View" in the preface to his "Fables." He complained, with some asperity, of the harshness with which he had been treated, and urged some matters in mitigation. But on the whole, he frankly acknowledged that he had been justly reproved. "If," said he, "Mr. Collier be my enemy, let him triumph. If he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance."

It would have been wise in Congreve to follow his master's example. He was precisely in that situation in which it is madness to attempt a vindication; for his guilt was so clear, that no address or eloquence could obtain an acquittal. On the other hand, there were, in his case, many extenuating circumstances, which, if he had acknowledged his error, and promised amendment, would have procured his pardon. The most rigid censor could not but make great allowances for the faults into which so young a man had been seduced by evil example, by the luxuriance of a vigorous fancy, and by the inebriating effect of popular applause. The esteem, as well as the admiration, of the

public was still within his reach. He might easily have effaced all memory of his transgressions, and have shared with Addison the glory of showing that the most brilliant wit may be the ally of virtue. But in any case, prudence should have restrained him from encountering Collier. The non-juror was a man throughly fitted by nature, education, and habit, for polemical dispute. Congreve's mind, though one of no common fertility and vigour, was of a different class. No man understood so well the art of polishing epigrams and repartees into the clearest effulgence, and setting them tastefully in easy and familiar dialogue. In this sort of jewellery he attained to a mastery unprecedented and inimitable. But he was altogether rude in the art of controversy, and he had a cause to defend which scarcely any art could have rendered victorious.

The event was such as might have been foreseen. Congreve's answer was a complete failure. He was angry, obscure, and dull. Even the Green Room and Wills' Coffee-House were compelled to acknowledge, that in wit the parson had a decided advantage over the poet. Not only was Congreve unable to make any show of a case where he was in the wrong, but he succeeded in putting himself completely in the wrong where he was in the right. Collier had taxed him with profaneness for calling a clergyman Mr. Prig, and for introducing a coachman named Jehu, in allusion to the King of Israel, who was known at a distance by his furious driving. Had there been nothing worse in the "Old Bachelor" and "Double Dealer," Congreve might pass for as pure a writer as Cowper himself; who in poems revised by so austere a censor as John Newton, calls a fox-hunting squire Nimrod, and gives to a chaplain the disrespectful name of Smug. Congreve might with good effect have appealed to the public whether it might not be fairly presumed that, when such frivolous

charges were made, there were no very serious charges to make. Instead of doing this, he pretended that he meant no allusion to the Bible by the name of Jehu, and no reflection by the name of Prig. Strange that a man of such parts should, in order to defend himself against imputations which nobody could regard as important, tell untruths which it was certain that nobody would believe.

One of the pleas which Congreve set up for himself and his brethren was, that, though they might be guilty of a little levity here and there, they were careful to inculcate a moral, packed close into two or three lines, at the end of every play. Had the fact been as he stated it, the defence would be worth very little. For no man acquainted with human nature could think that a sententious couplet would undo all the mischief that five profligate acts had done. But it would have been wise in Congreve to have looked again at his own comedies before he used this argument. Collier did so; and found that the moral of the "Old Bachelor"—the grave apophthegm which is to be a set-off against all the libertinism of the piece—is contained in the following triplet:—

> "What rugged ways attend the noon of life!
> Our sun declines, and with what anxious strife,
> What pain, we tug that galling load—a wife."

"'Love for Love,'" says Collier, "may have a somewhat better farewell, but it would do a man little service should he remember it to his dying day:"—

> "The miracle to-day is, that we find
> A lover true, not that a woman's kind."

Collier's reply was severe and triumphant. One of his repartees we will quote, not as a favourable specimen of his manner, but because it was called forth by Congreve's

characteristic affectation. The poet spoke of the "Old Bachelor" as a trifle to which he attached no value, and which had become public by a sort of accident. "I wrote it," he said, "to amuse myself in a slow recovery from a fit of sickness."—"What his disease was," replied Collier, "I am not to inquire: but it must be a very ill one to be worse than the remedy."

All that Congreve gained by coming forward on this occasion was, that he completely deprived himself of the excuse which he might with justice have pleaded for his early offences. "Why," asked Collier, "should the man laugh at the mischief of the boy, and make the disorders of his nonage his own, by an after approbation?"

Congreve was not Collier's only opponent. Vanbrugh, Denis, and Settle took the field. And, from the passage in a contemporary satire, we are inclined to think that among the answers to the "Short View," was one written, or supposed to be written, by Wycherley. The victory remained with Collier. A great and rapid reform in all the departments of our lighter literature was the effect of his labours. A new race of wits and poets arose, who generally treated with reverence the great ties which bind society together; and whose very indecencies were decent when compared with those of the school which flourished during the last forty years of the seventeenth century.

This controversy probably prevented Congreve from fulfilling the engagements into which he had entered with the actors. It was not till 1700 that he produced the "Way of the World," the most deeply meditated, and the most brilliantly written, of all his works. It wants, perhaps, the constant movement, the effervescence of animal spirits, which we find in "Love for Love." But the hysterical rants of Lady Wishfort, the meeting of Witwould and his brother, the country knight's courtship and his

subsequent revel, and above all, the chase and surrender of Milamant, are superior to anything that is to be found in the whole range of English comedy from the civil war downwards. It is quite inexplicable to us that this play should have failed on the stage. Yet so it was; and the author, already sore with the wounds which Collier had inflicted, was galled past endurance by this new stroke. He resolved never more to expose himself to the rudeness of a tasteless audience, and took leave of the theatre for ever.

He lived twenty-eight years longer, without adding to the high literary reputation which he had attained. He read much while he retained his eyesight, and now and then wrote a short essay, or an idle tale in verse; but appears never to have planned any considerable work. The miscellaneous pieces which he published in 1710, are of little value, and have long been forgotten.

The stock of fame which he had acquired by his comedies was sufficient, assisted by the graces of his manner and conversation, to secure for him a high place in the estimation of the world. During the winter, he lived among the most distinguished and agreeable people in London. His summers were passed at the splendid country-seats of ministers and peers. Literary envy, and political faction, which in that age respected nothing else, respected his repose. He professed to be one of the party of which his patron Montagu, now Lord Halifax, was the head. But he had civil words and small good offices for men of every shade of opinion. And men of every shade of opinion spoke well of him in return.

His means were for a long time scanty. The place which he had in possession, barely enabled him to live with comfort. And when the Tories came into power, some thought that he would lose even this moderate provision. But

Harley, who was by no means disposed to adopt the exterminating policy of the October club, and who, with all his faults of understanding and temper, had a sincere kindness for men of genius, reassured the anxious poet by quoting very gracefully and happily the lines of Virgil—

> "Non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora Pœni,
> Nec tam aversus equos Tyriâ sol jungit ab urbe."

The indulgence with which Congreve was treated by the Tories, was not purchased by any concession on his part which could justly offend the Whigs. It was his rare good-fortune to share the triumph of his friends without having shared their proscription. When the house of Hanover came to the throne, his fortunes began to flourish. The reversion to which he had been nominated twenty years before, fell in. He was made a secretary to the Island of Jamaica; and his whole income amounted to £1200 a year—a fortune which, for a single man, was, in that age, not only easy, but splendid. He continued, however, to practise the frugality which he had learned when he could scarcely spare, as Swift tells us, a shilling to pay the chairman who carried him to Lord Halifax's. Though he had nobody to save for, he laid up at least as much as he spent.

The infirmities of age came early upon him. His habits had been intemperate; he suffered much from gout; and when confined to his chamber, had no longer the solace of literature. Blindness, the most cruel misfortune that can befall the lonely student, made his books useless to him. He was thrown on society for all his amusement, and, in society, his good breeding and vivacity made him always welcome.

By the rising men of letters he was considered not as a rival, but as a classic. He had left their arena; he never

measured his strength with them; and he was always loud in applause of their exertions. They could, therefore, entertain no jealousy of him; and thought no more of detracting from his fame than of carping at the great men who had been lying a hundred years in Poet's Corner. Even the inmates of Grub Street, even the heroes of the Dunciad, were for once just to living merit. There can be no stronger illustration of the estimation in which Congreve was held, than the fact that Pope's Iliad, a work which appeared with more splendid auspices than any other in our language, was dedicated to him. There was not a Duke in the kingdom who would not have been proud of such a compliment. Dr. Johnson expresses great admiration for the independence of spirit which Pope showed on this occasion, and some surprise at his choice. "He passed over peers and statesmen to inscribe his 'Iliad' to Congreve, with a magnanimity of which the praise had been complete, had his friend's virtue been equal to his wit. Why he was chosen for so great an honour, it is not now possible to know." It is certainly impossible to know; yet, we think, it is possible to guess. The translation of the "Iliad" had been zealously befriended by men of all political opinions. The poet who at an early age had been raised to affluence by the emulous liberality of Whigs and Tories, could not with propriety inscribe to a chief of either party, a work which had been munificently patronised by both. It was necessary to find some person who was at once eminent and neutral. It was therefore necessary to pass over peers and statesmen. Congreve had a high name in letters. He had a high name in aristocratic circles. He lived on terms of civility with men of all parties. By a courtesy paid him neither the ministers nor the leaders of the opposition could be offended.

The singular affectation which had from the first been

characteristic of Congreve, grew stronger and stronger as he advanced in life. At last it became disagreeable to him to hear his own comedies praised. Voltaire, whose soul was burned up by the raging desire for literary renown, was half puzzled, half disgusted by what he saw, during his visit to England, of this extraordinary whim. Congreve disclaimed the character of a poet—declared that his plays were trifles produced in an idle hour, and begged that Voltaire would consider him merely as a gentleman. "If you had been merely a gentleman," said Voltaire, "I should not have come to see you."

Congreve was not a man of warm affections. Domestic ties he had none; and in the temporary connections which he formed with a succession of beauties from the green-room, his heart does not appear to have been at all interested. Of all his attachments, that to Mrs. Bracegirdle lasted the longest, and was the most celebrated. This charming actress, who was, during many years, the idol of all London; whose face caused the fatal broil in which Mountfort fell, and for which Lord Mohun was tried by the peers; and to whom the Earl of Scarsdale was said to have made honourable addresses, had conducted herself, in very trying circumstances, with extraordinary discretion. Congreve at length became her confidential friend. They constantly rode out together, and dined together. Some people said that she was his mistress, and others that she would soon be his wife. He was at last drawn away from her by the influence of a wealthier and haughtier beauty. Henrietta, daughter of the great Marlborough, and wife of the Earl of Godolphin, had, on her father's death, succeeded to his dukedom, and to the greater part of his immense property. Her husband was an insignificant man, of whom Lord Chesterfield said, that he came to the House of Peers only to sleep, and that he might as well sleep on the right as on

the left of the woolsack. Between the Duchess and Congreve sprung up a most eccentric friendship. He had a seat every day at her table, and assisted in the direction of her concerts. That malignant old hag, the Dowager Duchess Sarah, who had quarrelled with her daughter, as she had quarrelled with everybody else, affected to suspect that there was something wrong. But the world in general appears to have thought that a great lady might, without any imputation on her character, pay attention to a man of eminent genius, who was nearly sixty years old, who was still older in appearance and in constitution, who was confined to his chair by gout, and was unable to read from blindness.

In the summer of 1728, Congreve was ordered to try the Bath waters. During his excursion he was overturned in his chariot, and received some severe internal injury, from which he never recovered. He came back to London in a dangerous state, complained constantly of a pain in his side, and continued to sink, till, in the following January, he expired.

He left £10,000 saved out of the emoluments of his lucrative places. Johnson says that this money ought to have gone to the Congreve family, which was then in great distress. Doctor Young and Mr. Leigh Hunt, two gentlemen who seldom agree with each other, but with whom, on this occasion, we are happy to agree, think that it ought to have gone to Mrs. Bracegirdle. Congreve bequeathed £200 to Mrs. Bracegirdle, and an equal sum to a certain Mrs. Jellat; but the bulk of his accumulations went to the Duchess of Marlborough, in whose immense wealth such a legacy was as a drop in the bucket. It might have raised the fallen fortunes of a Staffordshire squire—it might have enabled a retired actress to enjoy every comfort, and, in her

sense, every luxury—but it was not sufficient to defray the Duchess's establishment for two months.

The great lady buried her friend with a pomp seldom seen at the funerals of poets. The corpse lay in state under the ancient roof of the Jerusalem Chamber, and was interred in Westminster Abbey. The pall was borne by the Duke of Bridgewater, Lord Cobham, the Earl of Wilmington, who had been Speaker, and who was afterwards First Lord of the Treasury, and other men of high consideration. Her grace laid out her friend's bequest in a superb diamond necklace, which she wore in honour of him; and, if report is to be believed, showed her regard in ways much more extraordinary. It is said that she had a statue of him in ivory, which moved by clockwork, and was placed daily at her table; that she had a wax doll made in imitation of him, and that the feet of this doll were regularly blistered and anointed by the doctors, as poor Congreve's feet had been when he suffered from the gout. A monument was erected to the poet in Westminster Abbey, with an inscription written by the Duchess; and Lord Cobham honoured him with a cenotaphy, which seems to us, though that is a bold word, the ugliest and most absurd of the buildings at Stowe.

We have said that Wycherley was a worse Congreve. There was, indeed, a remarkable analogy between the writings and lives of these two men. Both were gentlemen liberally educated. Both led town lives, and knew human nature only as it appears between Hyde Park and the Tower. Both were men of wit. Neither had much imagination. Both at an early age produced lively and profligate comedies. Both retired from the field while still in early manhood, and owed to their youthful achievements in literature the consideration which they enjoyed in later life. Both, after they had ceased to write for the stage, published volumes of miscellanies, which did little credit either to

their talents or their morals. Both, during their declining years, hung loose upon society; and both, in their last moments, made eccentric and unjustifiable dispositions respecting their estates.

But in every point Congreve maintained his superiority to Wycherley. Wycherley had wit; but the wit of Congreve far outshines that of every comic writer, except Sheridan, who has arisen within the last two centuries. Congreve had not, in a large measure, the poetical faculty; but compared with Wycherley he might be called a great poet. Wycherley had some knowledge of books; but Congreve was a man of real learning. Congreve's offences against decorum, though highly culpable, were not so gross as those of Wycherley; nor did Congreve, like Wycherley, exhibit to the world the deplorable spectacle of a licentious dotage. Congreve died in the enjoyment of high consideration; Wycherley forgotten or despised. Congreve's will was absurd and capricious; but Wycherley's last actions appeared to have been prompted by obdurate malignity.

Here, at least for the present, we must stop. Vanbrugh and Farquhar are not men to be hastily dismissed, and we have not left ourselves space to do them justice.

THE LATE LORD HOLLAND.*

[Edinburgh Review, for July, 1841.]

MANY reasons make it impossible for us to lay before our readers, at the present moment, a complete view of the character and public career of the late Lord Holland. But we feel that we have already deferred too long the duty of paying some tribute to his memory. We feel that it is more becoming to bring, without further delay, an offering, though intrinsically of little value, than to leave his tomb longer without some token of our reverence and love.

We shall say very little of the book which lies on our table. And yet it is a book which, even if it had been the work of a less distinguished man, or had appeared under circumstances less interesting, would have well repaid an attentive perusal. It is valuable, both as a record of principles and as a model of composition. We find in it all the great maxims which, during more than forty years, guided Lord Holland's public conduct, and the chief reasons on which those maxims rest; condensed into the smallest possible space, and set forth with admirable perspicuity, dignity, and precision. To his opinions on Foreign Policy, we for the most part cordially assent; but, now and then,

* *The Opinions of Lord Holland, as recorded in the Journals of the House of Lords, from* 1797 *to* 1841. Collected and Edited by D. C. MOYLAN, of Lincoln's Inn, Barrister-at-Law. 8vo. London: 1841.

we are inclined to think them imprudently generous. We could not have signed the Protest against the detention of Napoleon. The Protest respecting the course which England pursued at the Congress of Verona, though it contains much that is excellent, contains also positions which, we are inclined to think, Lord Holland would, at a later period, have admitted to be unsound. But to all his doctrines on Constitutional Questions, we give our hearty approbation; and we firmly believe that no British government has ever deviated from that line of internal policy which he has traced, without detriment to the public.

We will give, as a specimen of this little volume, a single passage, in which a chief article of the political creed of the Whigs is stated and explained, with singular clearness, force, and brevity. Our readers will remember that, in 1825, the Catholic Association agitated for emancipation with most formidable effect. The Tories acted after their kind. Instead of removing the grievance they tried to put down the agitation; and brought in a law, apparently sharp and stringent, but, in truth, utterly impotent, for restraining the right of petition. Lord Holland's Protest on that occasion is excellent.

"We are," says he, "well aware that the privileges of the people, the rights of free discussion, and the spirit and letter of our popular institutions, must render—and they are intended to render—the continuance of an extensive grievance, and of the dissatisfaction consequent thereupon, dangerous to the tranquillity of the country, and ultimately subversive of the authority of the state. Experience and theory alike forbid us to deny that effect of a free constitution; a sense of justice and a love of liberty equally deter us from lamenting it. But we have always been taught to look for the remedy of such disorders in the redress of the grievances which justify them, and in the removal of the dissatisfaction from which they flow—not in restraints on ancient privileges, not in inroads on the right of public discussion, nor in

violations of the principles of a free government. If, therefore, the legal method of seeking redress, which has been resorted to by persons labouring under grievous disabilities, be fraught with immediate or remote danger to the state, we draw from that circumstance a conclusion long since foretold by great authority—namely, that the British constitution, and large exclusions, cannot subsist together; that the constitution must destroy them, or they will destroy the constitution."

It was not, however, of this little book, valuable and interesting as it is, but of the author, that we meant to speak; and we will try to do so with calmness and impartiality.

In order fully to appreciate the character of Lord Holland, it is necessary to go far back into the history of his family; for he had inherited something more than a coronet and an estate. To the House of which he was the head belongs one distinction, which we believe to be without a parallel in our annals. During more than a century, there has never been a time at which a Fox has not stood in a prominent station amongst public men. Scarcely had the chequered career of the first Lord Holland closed, when his son, Charles, rose to the head of the Opposition, and to the first rank among English debaters. And before Charles was borne to Westminster Abbey, a third Fox had already become one of the most conspicuous politicians in the kingdom.

It is impossible not to be struck by the strong family likeness which, in spite of diversities arising from education and position, appears in these three distinguished persons. In their faces and figures there was a resemblance, such as is common enough in novels, where one picture is good for ten generations, but such as in real life is seldom found. The ample person, the massy and thoughtful forehead, the large eyebrows, the full cheek and lip; the expression, so singularly compounded of sense, humour,

courage, openness, a strong will and a sweet temper, were common to all. But the features of the founder of the House, as the pencil of Reynolds and the chisel of Nollekens have handed them down to us, were disagreeably harsh and exaggerated. In his descendants, the aspect was preserved; but it was softened, till it became, in the late lord, the most gracious and interesting countenance that was ever lighted up by the mingled lustre of intelligence and benevolence.

As it was with the faces of the men of this noble family, so was it with their minds. Nature had done much for them all. She had moulded them all of that clay of which she is most sparing. To all she had given strong reason and sharp wit; a quick relish for every physical and intellectual enjoyment; constitutional intrepidity, and that frankness by which constitutional intrepidity is generally accompanied; spirits which nothing could depress; tempers easy, generous, and placable; and that genial courtesy which has its seat in the heart, and of which artificial politeness is only a faint and cold imitation. Such a disposition is the richest inheritance that ever was entailed on any family.

But training and situation greatly modified the fine qualities which nature lavished with such profusion on three generations of the house of Fox. The first Lord Holland was a needy political adventurer. He entered public life at a time when the standard of integrity among statesmen was low. He started as the adherent of a minister who had indeed many titles to respect; who possessed eminent talents both for administration and for debate; who understood the public interest well, and who meant fairly by the country; but who had seen so much perfidy and meanness, that he had become skeptical as to the existence of probity. Weary of the cant of patriotism, Walpole had learned to talk a cant of a different kind. Disgusted by that sort of

hypocrisy which is at least a homage to virtue, he was too much in the habit of practising the less respectable hypocrisy which ostentatiously displays, and sometimes even simulates vice. To Walpole, Fox attached himself politically and personally, with the ardour which belonged to his temperament. And it is not to be denied, that in the school of Walpole he contracted faults which destroyed the value of his many great endowments. He raised himself, indeed, to the first consideration in the House of Commons; he became a consummate master of the art of debate; he attained honours and immense wealth—but the public esteem and confidence were withheld from him. His private friends, indeed, justly extolled his generosity and good-nature. They maintained, that in those parts of his conduct which they could least defend, there was nothing sordid; and that, if he was misled, he was misled by amiable feelings—by a desire to serve his friends, and by anxious tenderness for his children. But by the nation he was regarded as a man of insatiable rapacity and desperate ambition; as a man ready to adopt, without scruple, the most immoral and the most unconstitutional measures; as a man perfectly fitted, by all his opinions and feelings, for the work of managing the Parliament by means of secret service-money, and of keeping down the people with the bayonet. Many of his contemporaries had a morality quite as lax as his; but very few among them had his talents, and none had his hardihood and energy. He could not, like Sandys and Doddington, find safety in contempt. He therefore became an object of such general aversion as no statesman since the fall of Strafford has incurred—of such general aversion as was probably never in any country incurred by a man of so kind and cordial a disposition. A weak mind would have sunk under such a load of unpopularity. But that resolute spirit seemed to derive new firmness from the pub-

lic hatred. The only effect which reproaches appeared to produce on him, was to sour, in some degree, his naturally sweet temper. The last steps of his public life were marked, not only by that audacity which he had derived from nature—not only by that immorality which he had learned in the school of Walpole—but by a harshness which almost amounted to cruelty, and which had never been supposed to belong to his character. His severity increased the unpopularity from which it had sprung. The well-known lampoon of Gray may serve as a specimen of the feeling of the country. All the images are taken from shipwrecks, quicksands, and cormorants. Lord Holland is represented as complaining, that the cowardice of his accomplices had prevented him from putting down the free spirit of the city of London by sword and fire, and as pining for the time when birds of prey should make their nests in Westminster Abbey, and unclean beasts burrow in St. Paul's.

Within a few months after the death of this remarkable man, his second son Charles appeared at the head of the party opposed to the American War. Charles had inherited the bodily and mental constitution of his father, and had been much—far too much—under his father's influence. It was indeed impossible that a son of so affectionate and noble a spirit should not have been warmly attached to a parent who possessed many fine qualities, and who carried his indulgence and liberality towards his children even to a culpable extent. The young man saw that the person to whom he was bound by the strongest ties, was, in the highest degree, odious to the nation; and the effect was what might have been expected from his strong passions and constitutional boldness. He cast in his lot with his father, and took, while still a boy, a deep part in the most unjustifiable and unpopular measures that had been adopted

since the reign of James the Second. In the debates on the Middlesex election, he distinguished himself, not only by his precocious powers of eloquence, but by the vehement and scornful manner in which he bade defiance to public opinion. He was at that time regarded as a man likely to be the most formidable champion of arbitrary government that had appeared since the Revolution—to be a Bute with far greater powers—a Mansfield with far greater courage. Happily his father's death liberated him early from the pernicious influence by which he had been misled. His mind expanded. His range of observation became wider. His genius broke through early prejudices. His natural benevolence and magnanimity had fair play. In a very short time he appeared in a situation worthy of his understanding and of his heart. From a family whose name was associated in the public mind with tyranny and corruption—from a party of which the theory and the practice were equally servile—from the midst of the Luttrells, the Dysons, the Barringtons—came forth the greatest parliamentary defender of civil and religious liberty.

The late Lord Holland succeeded to the talents and to the fine natural dispositions of his House. But his situation was very different from that of the two eminent men of whom we have spoken. In some important respects it was better; in some it was worse than theirs. He had one great advantage over them. He received a good political education. The first lord was educated by Sir Robert Walpole. Mr. Fox was educated by his father. The late lord was educated by Mr. Fox. The pernicious maxims early imbibed by the first Lord Holland, made his great talents useless, and worse than useless, to the state. The pernicious maxims early imbibed by Mr. Fox, led him, at the commencement of his public life, into great faults, which, though afterwards nobly expiated, were never for-

gotten. To the very end of his career, small men, when they had nothing else to say in defence of their own tyranny, bigotry, and imbecility, could always raise a cheer by some paltry taunt about the election of Colonel Luttrell, the imprisonment of the lord mayor, and other measures in which the great Whig leader had borne a part at the age of one or two-and-twenty. On Lord Holland no such slur could be thrown. Those who most dissent from his opinions must acknowledge, that a public life, more consistent, is not to be found in our annals. Every part of it is in perfect harmony with every other; and the whole is in perfect harmony with the great principles of toleration and civil freedom. This rare felicity is in a great measure to be attributed to the influence of Mr. Fox. Lord Holland, as was natural in a person of his talents and expectations, began at a very early age to take the keenest interest in politics; and Mr. Fox found the greatest pleasure in forming the mind of so hopeful a pupil. They corresponded largely on political subjects when the young lord was only sixteen; and their friendship and mutual confidence continued to the day of that mournful separation at Chiswick. Under such training, such a man as Lord Holland was in no danger of falling into those faults which threw a dark shade over the whole career of his grandfather, and from which the youth of his uncle was not wholly free.

On the other hand, the late Lord Holland, as compared with his grandfather and his uncle, laboured under one great disadvantage. They were members of the House of Commons. He became a Peer while still an infant. When he entered public life, the House of Lords was a very small and a very decorous assembly. The minority to which he belonged was scarcely able to muster five or six votes on the most important nights, when eighty or ninety lords

were present. Debate had accordingly become a mere form, as it was in the Irish House of Peers before the Union. This was a great misfortune to a man like Lord Holland. It was not by occasionally addressing fifteen or twenty solemn and unfriendly auditors, that his grandfather and his uncle attained their unrivalled parliamentary skill. The former had learned his art in "the great Walpolean battles," on nights when Onslow was in the chair seventeen hours without intermission; when the thick ranks on both sides kept unbroken order till long after the winter sun had risen upon them; when the blind were led out by the hand into the lobby; and the paralytic laid down in their bed-clothes on the benches. The powers of Charles Fox were, from the first, exercised in conflicts not less exciting. The great talents of the late Lord Holland had no such advantage. This was the more unfortunate, because the peculiar species of eloquence, which belonged to him in common with his family, required much practice to develope it. With strong sense, and the greatest readiness of wit, a certain tendency to hesitation was hereditary in the line of Fox. This hesitation arose, not from the poverty but from the wealth of their vocabulary. They paused, not from the difficulty of finding one expression, but from the difficulty of choosing between several. It was only by slow degrees, and constant exercise, that the first Lord Holland and his son overcame the defect. Indeed, neither of them overcame it completely.

In statement, the late Lord Holland was not successful; his chief excellence lay in reply. He had the quick eye of his House for the unsound parts of an argument, and a great felicity in exposing them. He was decidedly more distinguished in debate than any Peer of his times who had not sat in the House of Commons. Nay, to find his equal among persons similarly situated, we must go

back eighty years—to Earl Granville. For Mansfield, Thurlow, Loughborough, Grey, Grenville, Brougham, Plunkett, and other eminent men, living and dead, whom we will not stop to enumerate, carried to the Upper House an eloquence formed and matured in the Lower. The opinion of the most discerning judges was, that Lord Holland's oratorical performances, though sometimes most successful, afforded no fair measure of his oratorical powers; and that, in an assembly of which the debates were frequent and animated, he would have attained a very high order of excellence. It was, indeed, impossible to converse with him without seeing that he was born a debater. To him, as to his uncle, the exercise of the mind in discussion was a positive pleasure. With the greatest good nature and good breeding, he was the very opposite to an assenter. The word 'disputatious' is generally used as a word of reproach; but we can express our meaning only by saying that Lord Holland was most courteously and pleasantly disputatious. In truth, his quickness in discovering and apprehending distinctions and analogies was such as a veteran judge might envy. The lawyers of the Duchy of Lancaster were astonished to find in an unprofessional man so strong a relish for the esoteric parts of their science; and complained that as soon as they had split a hair, Lord Holland proceeded to split the filaments into filaments still finer. In a mind less happily constituted, there might have been a risk that this turn for subtilty would have produced serious evil. But in the heart and understanding of Lord Holland there was ample security against all such danger. He was not a man to be the dupe of his own ingenuity. He put his Logic to its proper use; and in him the dialectician was always subordinate to the statesman.

His political life is written in the chronicles of his coun-

try. Perhaps, as we have already intimated, his opinions on two or three great questions of Foreign Policy were open to just objection. Yet even his errors, if he erred, were amiable and respectable. We are not sure that we do not love and admire him the more because he was now and then seduced from what we regard as a wise policy, by sympathy with the oppressed; by generosity towards the fallen; by a philanthropy so enlarged, that it took in all nations; by love of peace, which in him was second only to the love of freedom; by the magnanimous credulity of a mind which was as incapable of suspecting as of devising mischief.

To his views on questions of Domestic Policy, the voice of his countrymen does ample justice. They revere the memory of the man who was, during forty years, the constant protector of all oppressed races, of all persecuted sects —of the man, whom neither the prejudices nor the interests belonging to his station could seduce from the path of right —of the noble, who in every great crisis cast in his lot with the commons—of the planter, who made manful war on the slave-trade—of the landowner, whose whole heart was in the struggle against the corn-laws.

We have hitherto touched almost exclusively on those parts of Lord Holland's character which were open to the observation of millions. How shall we express the feelings with which his memory is cherished by those who were honoured with his friendship? Or in what language shall we speak of that House, once celebrated for its rare attractions to the furthest ends of the civilised world, and now silent and desolate as the grave? That House was, a hundred and twenty years ago, apostrophised by a poet in tender and graceful lines, which have now acquired a new meaning not less sad than that which they originally bore:—

"Thou hill, whose brow the antique structures grace,
Rear'd by bold chiefs of Warwick's noble race,
Why, once so loved, whene'er thy bower appears,
O'er my dim eyeballs glance the sudden tears?
How sweet were once thy prospects fresh and fair,
Thy sloping walks, and unpolluted air!
How sweet the glooms beneath thine aged trees,
Thy noon-tide shadow, and thine evening breeze!
His image thy forsaken bowers restore;
Thy walks and airy prospects charm no more;
No more the summer in thy glooms allay'd,
Thine evening breezes, and thy noon-day shade."

Yet a few years, and the shades and structures may follow their illustrious masters. The wonderful city which, ancient and gigantic as it is, still continues to grow as fast as a young town of logwood by a water-privilege in Michigan, may soon displace those turrets and gardens which are associated with so much that is interesting and noble—with the courtly magnificence of Rich—with the loves of Ormond—with the counsels of Cromwell—with the death of Addison. The time is coming when, perhaps, a few old men, the last survivors of our generation, will in vain seek, amidst new streets, and squares, and rail-way stations, for the site of that dwelling which was in their youth the favourite resort of wits and beauties—of painters and poets—of scholars, philosophers, and statesmen. They will then remember, with strange tenderness, many objects once familiar to them—the avenue and the terrace, the busts and the paintings; the carving, the grotesque gilding, and the enigmatical mottoes. With peculiar fondness, they will recall that venerable chamber, in which all the antique gravity of a college library was so singularly blended with all that female grace and wit could devise to embellish a drawing-room. They will recollect, not unmoved, those

shelves loaded with the varied learning of many lands and many ages; those portraits in which were preserved the features of the best and wisest Englishmen of two generations. They will recollect how many men who have guided the politics of Europe—who have moved great assemblies by reason and eloquence—who have put life into bronze and canvass, or who have left to posterity things so written as it shall not willingly let them die—were there mixed with all that was loveliest and gayest in the society of the most splendid of capitals. They will remember the singular character which belonged to that circle, in which every talent and accomplishment, every art and science, had its place. They will remember how the last debate was discussed in one corner, and the last comedy of Scribe in another; while Wilkie gazed with modest admiration on Reynolds' Baretti; while Mackintosh turned over Thomas Aquinas to verify a quotation; while Talleyrand related his conversations with Barras at the Luxemburg, or his ride with Lannes over the field of Austerlitz. They will remember, above all, the grace—and the kindness, far more admirable than grace—with which the princely hospitality of that ancient mansion was dispensed. They will remember the venerable and benignant countenance, and the cordial voice of him who bade them welcome. They will remember that temper which years of pain, of sickness, of lameness, of confinement, seemed only to make sweeter and sweeter; and that frank politeness, which at once relieved all the embarrassment of the youngest and most timid writer or artist, who found himself for the first time among Ambassadors and Earls. They will remember that constant flow of conversation, so natural, so animated, so various, so rich with observation and anecdote; that wit which never gave a wound; that exquisite mimicry which ennobled, instead of degrading; that goodness of heart which

appeared in every look and accent, and gave additional value to every talent and acquirement. They will remember, too, that he whose name they hold in reverence was not less distinguished by the inflexible uprightness of his political conduct, than by his loving disposition and his winning manners. They will remember that, in the last lines which he traced, he expressed his joy that he had done nothing unworthy of the friend of Fox and Grey; and they will have reason to feel similar joy, if, in looking back on many troubled years, they cannot accuse themselves of having done anything unworthy of men who were distinguished by the friendship of Lord Holland.

WARREN HASTINGS.*

[Edinburgh Review, October, 1841.]

This book seems to have been manufactured in pursuance of a contract, by which the representatives of Warren Hastings, on the one part, bound themselves to furnish papers, and Mr. Gleig, on the other part, bound himself to furnish praise. It is but just to say that the covenants on both sides have been most faithfully kept; and the result is before us in the form of three big bad volumes, full of undigested correspondence and undiscerning panegyric.

If it were worth while to examine this performance in detail, we could easily make a long article by merely pointing out inaccurate statements, inelegant expressions, and immoral doctrines. But it would be idle to waste criticism on a bookmaker; and, whatever credit Mr. Gleig may have justly earned by former works, it is as a bookmaker, and nothing more, that he now comes before us. More eminent men than Mr. Gleig have written nearly as ill as he, when they have stooped to similar drudgery. It would be unjust to estimate Goldsmith by the History of Greece, or Scott by the life of Napoleon. Mr. Gleig is neither a Goldsmith nor a Scott; but it would be unjust to deny that he is capable of something better than these memoirs. It

* *Memoirs of the Life of Warren Hastings, first Governor-General of Bengal.* Compiled from Original Papers, by the Rev. G. R. Gleig, M. A. 3 vols. 8vo. London: 1841.

would also, we hope and believe, be unjust to charge any Christian minister with the guilt of deliberately maintaining some propositions which we find in this book. It is not too much to say, that Mr. Gleig has written several passages, which bear the same relation to the "Prince" of Machiavelli that the "Prince" of Machiavelli bears to the "Whole Duty of Man," and which would excite amazement in a den of robbers, or on board of a schooner of pirates. But we are willing to attribute these offences to haste, to thoughtlessness, and to that disease of the understanding which may be called the *Furor Biographicus*, and which is to writers of lives what the *goître* is to an Alpine shepherd, or dirt-eating to a Negro slave.

We are inclined to think that we shall best meet the wishes of our readers, if, instead of dwelling on the faults of this book, we attempt to give, in a way necessarily hasty and imperfect, our own view of the life and character of Mr. Hastings. Our feeling towards him is not exactly that of the House of Commons which impeached him in 1787; neither is it that of the House of Commons which uncovered and stood up to receive him in 1813. He had great qualities, and he rendered great services to the state. But to represent him as a man of stainless virtue, is to make him ridiculous; and from regard for his memory, if from no other feeling, his friends would have done well to lend no countenance to such puerile adulation. We believe that, if he were now living, he would have sufficient judgment and sufficient greatness of mind to wish to be shown as he was. He must have known that there were dark spots on his fame. He might also have felt with pride, that the splendour of his fame would bear many spots. He would have preferred, we are confident, even the severity of Mr. Mill to the puffing of Mr. Gleig. He would have wished posterity to have a likeness of him, though an un-

favourable likeness, rather than a daub at once insipid and unnatural, resembling neither him nor anybody else. "Paint me as I am," said Oliver Cromwell, while sitting to young Lely. "If you leave out the scars and wrinkles, I will not pay you a shilling." Even in such a trifle, the great Protector showed both his good sense and his magnanimity. He did not wish all that was characteristic in his countenance to be lost, in the vain attempt to give him the regular features and the smooth blooming cheeks of the curl-pated minions of James the First. He was content that his face should go forth marked with all the blemishes which had been put on it by time, by war, by sleepless nights, by anxiety, perhaps by remorse; but with valour, policy, authority, and public care, written in all its princely lines. If men truly great knew their own interest, it is thus that they would wish their minds to be portrayed.

Warren Hastings sprang from an ancient and illustrious race. It has been affirmed that his pedigree can be traced back to the great Danish sea-king, whose sails were long the terror of both coasts of the British channel; and who, after many fierce and doubtful struggles, yielded at last to the valour and genius of Alfred. But the undoubted splendour of the line of Hastings, needs no illustration from fable. One branch of that line wore, in the fourteenth century, the coronet of Pembroke. From another branch sprang the renowned Chamberlain, the faithful adherent of the White Rose, whose fate has furnished so striking a theme both to poets and to historians. His family received from the Tudors the earldom of Huntingdon; which, after long dispossession, was regained in our time by a series of events scarcely paralleled in romance.

The lords of the manor of Daylesford, in Worcestershire, claimed to be considered as the heads of this distinguished family. The main stock, indeed, prospered less than some

of the younger shoots. But the Daylesford family, though not ennobled, was wealthy and highly considered, till, about two hundred years ago, it was overwhelmed in the great ruin of the civil war. The Hastings of that time was a zealous cavalier. He raised money on his own lands, sent his plate to the mint at Oxford, joined the royal army, and, after spending half of his property in the cause of King Charles, was glad to ransom himself by making over most of the remaining half to Speaker Lenthal. The old seat at Daylesford still remained in the family; but it could no longer be kept up; and in the following generation it was sold to a merchant of London.

Before the transfer took place, the last Hastings of Daylesford had presented his second son to the rectory of the parish in which the ancient residence of the family stood. The living was of little value; and the situation of the poor clergyman, after the sale of the estate, was deplorable. He was constantly engaged in lawsuits about his tithes with the new lord of the manor, and was at length utterly ruined. His eldest son, Howard, a well-conducted young man, obtained a place in the Customs. The second son, Pynaston, an idle, worthless boy, married before he was sixteen, lost his wife in two years, and went to the West Indies, where he died, leaving to the care of his unfortunate father a little orphan, destined to strange and memorable vicissitudes of fortune.

Warren, the son of Pynaston, was born on the 6th of December, 1732. His mother died a few days later, and he was left dependent on his distressed grandfather. The child was early sent to the village school, where he learned his letters on the same bench with the sons of the peasantry. Nor did anything in his garb or fare indicate that his life was to take a widely different course from that of the young rustics with whom he studied and played. But no cloud

could overcast the dawn of so much genius and so much ambition. The very ploughmen observed, and long remembered, how kindly little Warren took to his book. The daily sight of the lands which his ancestors had possessed, and which had passed into the hands of strangers, filled his young brain with wild fancies and projects. He loved to hear stories of the wealth and greatness of his progenitors—of their splendid housekeeping, their loyalty, and their valour. On one bright summer day, the boy, then just seven years old, lay on the bank of the rivulet which flows through the old domain of his house to join the Isis. There, as three-score and ten years later he told the tale, rose in his mind a scheme which, through all the turns of his eventful career, was never abandoned. He would recover the estate which had belonged to his fathers. He would be Hastings of Daylesford. This purpose, formed in infancy and poverty, grew stronger as his intellect expanded and as his fortune rose. He pursued his plan with that calm but indomitable force of will, which was the most striking peculiarity of his character. When, under a tropical sun, he ruled fifty millions of Asiatics, his hopes, amidst all the cares of war, finance, and legislation, still pointed to Daylesford. And when his long public life, so singularly chequered with good and evil, with glory and obloquy, had at length closed for ever, it was to Daylesford that he retired to die.

When he was eight years old, his uncle, Howard, determined to take charge of him, and to give him a liberal education. The boy went up to London, and was sent to a school at Newington, where he was well taught but ill fed. He always attributed the smallness of his stature to the hard and scanty fare of this seminary. At ten he was removed to Westminister school, then flourishing under the care of Dr. Nichols. Vinny Bourne, as his pupils affectionately called him, was one of the masters. Churchill,

Colman, Lloyd, Cumberland, Cowper, were among the students. With Cowper, Hastings formed a friendship which neither the lapse of time, nor a wide dissimilarity of opinions and pursuits, could wholly dissolve. It does not appear that they ever met after they had grown to manhood. But many years later, when the voices of a crowd of great orators were crying for vengeance on the oppressor of India, the shy and secluded poet could imagine to himself Hastings the Governor-General, only as the Hastings with whom he had rowed on the Thames and played in the cloister; and refused to believe that so good-tempered a fellow could have done anything very wrong. His own life had been spent in praying, musing, and rhyming among the waterlilies of the Ouse. He had preserved in no common measure the innocence of childhood. His spirit had indeed been severely tried, but not by temptations which impelled him to any gross violation of the rules of social morality. He had never been attacked by combinations of powerful and deadly enemies. He had never been compelled to make a choice between innocence and greatness, between crime and ruin. Firmly as he held in theory the doctrine of human depravity, his habits were such, that he was unable to conceive how far from the path of right, even kind and noble natures may be hurried by the rage of conflict and the lust of dominion.

Hastings had another associate at Westminster, of whom we shall have occasion to make frequent mention—Elijah Impey. We know little about their school days. But we think we may safely venture to guess that, whenever Hastings wished to play any trick more than usually naughty, he hired Impey with a tart or a ball to act as fag in the worst part of the prank.

Warren was distinguished among his comrades as an excellent swimmer, boatman, and scholar. At fourteen he

was first in the examination for the foundation. His name in gilded letters on the walls of the dormitory, still attests his victory over many older competitors. He stayed two years longer at the school, and was looking forward to a studentship at Christ Church, when an event happened which changed the whole course of his life. Howard Hastings died, bequeathing his nephew to the care of a friend and distant relation, named Chiswick. This gentleman, though he did not absolutely refuse the charge, was desirous to rid himself of it as soon as possible. Dr. Nichols made strong remonstrances against the cruelty of interrupting the studies of a youth who seemed likely to be one of the first scholars of the age. He even offered to bear the expense of sending his favourite pupil to Oxford. But Mr. Chiswick was inflexible. He thought the years which had already been wasted on hexameters and pentameters quite sufficient. He had it in his power to obtain for the lad a writership in the service of the East India Company. Whether the young adventurer, when once shipped off, made a fortune, or died of a liver complaint, he equally ceased to be a burden to anybody. Warren was accordingly removed from Westminster school, and placed for a few months at a commercial academy, to study arithmetic and book-keeping. In January, 1750, a few days after he had completed his seventeenth year, he sailed for Bengal, and arrived at his destination in the October following.

He was immediately placed at a desk in the Secretary's office at Calcutta, and laboured there during two years. Fort William was then a purely commercial settlement. In the south of India the encroaching policy of Dupleix had transformed the servants of the English company, against their will, into diplomatists and generals. The war of the succession was raging in the Carnatic; and the tide had been suddenly turned against the French by the genius of

young Robert Clive. But in Bengal, the European settlers, at peace with the natives and with each other, were wholly occupied with Ledgers and Bills of lading.

After two years passed in keeping accounts at Calcutta, Hastings was sent up the country to Cossimbazar, a town which lies on the Hoogly, about a mile from Moorshedabad, and which then bore to Moorshedabad a relation, if we may compare small things with great, such as the city of London bears to Westminster. Moorshedabad was the abode of the prince who, by an authority ostensibly derived from the Mogul, but really independent, ruled the three great provinces of Bengal, Orissa, and Bahar. At Moorshedabad were the court, the harem, and the public offices. Cossimbazar was a port and a place of trade, renowned for the quantity and excellence of the silks which were sold in its marts, and constantly receiving and sending forth fleets of richly laden barges. At this important point, the Company had established a small factory subordinate to that of Fort William. Here, during several years, Hastings was employed in making bargains for stuffs with native brokers. While he was thus engaged, Surajah Dowlah succeeded to the government, and declared war against the English. The defenceless settlement of Cossimbazar, lying close to the tyrant's capital, was instantly seized. Hastings was sent a prisoner to Moorshedabad: but, in consequence of the humane intervention of the servants of the Dutch Company, was treated with indulgence. Meanwhile the Nabob marched on Calcutta; the governor and the commandant fled; the town and citadel were taken, and most of the English prisoners perished in the Blackhole.

In these events originated the greatness of Warren Hastings. The fugitive governor and his companions had taken refuge on the dreary islet of Fulda, near the mouth of the Hoogly. They were naturally desirous to obtain full

information respecting the proceedings of the Nabob; and no person seemed so likely to furnish it as Hastings, who was a prisoner at large in the immediate neighbourhood of the court. He thus became a diplomatic agent, and soon established a high character of ability and resolution. The treason which at a later period was fatal to Surajah Dowlah, was already in progress; and Hastings was admitted to the deliberations of the conspirators. But the time for striking had not arrived. It was necessary to postpone the execution of the design; and Hastings, who was now in extreme peril, fled to Fulda.

Soon after his arrival at Fulda, the expedition from Madras, commanded by Clive, appeared in the Hoogly. Warren, young, intrepid, and excited probably by the example of the Commander of the Forces, who, having like himself been a mercantile agent of the Company, had been turned by public calamities into a soldier, determined to serve in the ranks. During the early operations of the war he carried a musket. But the quick eye of Clive soon perceived that the head of the young volunteer would be more useful than his arm. When, after the battle of Plassey, Meer Jaffier was proclaimed Nabob of Bengal, Hastings was appointed to reside at the court of the new prince as agent for the Company.

He remained at Moorshedabad till the year 1761, when he became a member of Council, and was consequently forced to reside at Calcutta. This was during the interval between Clive's first and second administration—an interval which has left on the fame of the East India Company a stain, not wholly effaced by many years of just and humane government. Mr. Vansittart, the Governor, was at the head of a new and anomalous empire. On the one side was a band of English functionaries, daring, intelligent, eager to be rich. On the other side was a great native

population, helpless, timid, accustomed to crouch under oppression. To keep the stronger race from preying on the weaker, was an undertaking which tasked to the utmost the talents and energy of Clive. Vansittart, with fair intentions, was a feeble and inefficient ruler. The master caste, as was natural, broke loose from all restraint; and then was seen what we believe to be the most frightful of all spectacles, the strength of civilisation without its mercy. To all other despotism there is a check: imperfect, indeed, and liable to gross abuse, but still sufficient to preserve society from the last extreme of misery. A time comes when the evils of submission are obviously greater than those of resistance; when fear itself begets a sort of courage; when a convulsive burst of popular rage and despair warns tyrants not to presume too far on the patience of mankind. But against misgovernment such as then afflicted Bengal, it was impossible to struggle. The superior intelligence and energy of the dominant class made their power irresistible. A war of Bengalees against Englishmen, was like a war of sheep against wolves, of men against demons. The only protection which the conquered could find was in the moderation, the clemency, the enlarged policy of the conquerors. That protection, at a later period, they found. But at first, English power came among them unaccompanied by English morality. There was an interval between the time at which they became our subjects, and the time at which we began to reflect that we were bound to discharge towards them the duties of rulers. During that interval, the business of a servant of the Company was simply to wring out of the natives a hundred or two hundred thousand pounds as speedily as possible, that he might return home before his constitution had suffered from the heat, to marry a peer's daughter, to buy rotten boroughs in Cornwall, and to give balls in St. James's

Square. Of the conduct of Hastings at this time, little is known; but the little that is known, and the circumstance that little is known, must be considered as honourable to him. He could not protect the natives: all that he could do was, to abstain from plundering and oppressing them; and this he appears to have done. It is certain that at this time he continued poor; and it is equally certain, that by cruelty and dishonesty he might easily have become rich. It is certain that he was never charged with having borne a share in the abuses which then prevailed; and it is almost equally certain that, if he had borne a share in those abuses, the able and bitter enemies who afterwards persecuted him, would not have failed to discover and to proclaim his guilt. The keen, severe, and even malevolent scrutiny to which his whole public life was subjected—a scrutiny unparalleled, as we believe, in the history of mankind—is, in one respect, advantageous to his reputation. It brought many lamentable blemishes to light; but it entitles him to be considered pure from every blemish which has not been brought to light.

The truth is, that the temptations to which so many English functionaries yielded in the time of Mr. Vansittart, were not temptations addressed to the ruling passions of Warren Hastings. He was not squeamish in pecuniary transactions; but he was neither sordid nor rapacious. He was far too enlightened a man to look on a great empire merely as a buccanier would look on a galleon. Had his heart been much worse than it was, his understanding would have preserved him from that extremity of baseness. He was an unscrupulous, perhaps an unprincipled statesman; but still he was a statesman, and not a freebooter.

In 1764, Hastings returned to England. He had realised only a very moderate fortune; and that moderate fortune was soon reduced to nothing, partly by his praiseworthy

liberality, and partly by his mismanagement. Towards his relations he appears to have acted very generously. The greater part of his savings he left in Bengal, hoping probably to obtain the high usury of India. But high usury and bad security generally go together; and Hastings lost both interest and principal.

He remained four years in England. Of his life at this time very little is known. But it has been asserted, and is highly probable, that liberal studies, and the society of men of letters, occupied a great part of his time. It is to be remembered to his honour, that in days when the languages of the East were regarded by other servants of the Company merely as the means of communicating with weavers and money-changers, his enlarged and accomplished mind sought in Asiatic learning for new forms of intellectual enjoyment, and for new views of government and society. Perhaps, like most persons who have paid much attention to departments of knowledge which lie out of the common track, he was inclined to overrate the value of his favourite studies. He conceived that the cultivation of Persian literature might with advantage be made a part of the liberal education of an English gentleman; and he drew up a plan with that view. It is said that the University of Oxford, in which Oriental learning had never, since the revival of letters, been wholly neglected, was to be the seat of the institution which he contemplated. An endowment was expected from the munificence of the Company; and professors thoroughly competent to interpret Hafiz and Ferdusi were to be engaged in the East. Hastings called on Johnson, with the hope, as it would seem, of interesting in his project a man who enjoyed the highest literary reputation, and who was particularly connected with Oxford. The interview appears to have left on Johnson's mind a most favourable impression of the talents and

attainments of his visiter. Long after, when Hastings was ruling the immense population of British India, the old philosopher wrote to him, and referred in the most courtly terms, though with great dignity, to their short but agreeable intercourse.

Hastings soon began to look again towards India. He had little to attach him to England; and his pecuniary embarrassments were great. He solicited his old masters the Directors for employment. They acceded to his request, with high compliments both to his abilities and to his integrity, and appointed him a Member of Council at Madras. It would be unjust not to mention, that though forced to borrow money for his outfit, he did not withdraw any portion of the sum which he had appropriated to the relief of his distressed relations. In the spring of 1769 he embarked on board of the "Duke of Grafton," and commenced a voyage distinguished by incidents which might furnish matter for a novel.

Among the passengers in the "Duke of Grafton," was a German by the name of Imhoff. He called himself a baron, but he was in distressed circumstances; and was going out to Madras as a portrait painter, in the hope of picking up some of the pagodas which were then lightly got and as lightly spent by the English in India. The baron was accompanied by his wife, a native, we have somewhere read, of Archangel. This young woman, who, born under the Arctic circle, was destined to play the part of a Queen under the tropic of Cancer, had an agreeable person, a cultivated mind, and manners in the highest degree engaging. She despised her husband heartily, and, as the story which we have to tell sufficiently proves, not without reason. She was interested by the conversation and flattered by the attentions of Hastings. The situation was indeed perilous. No place is so propitious to the for-

mation either of close friendships, or of deadly enmities as an Indiaman. There are very few people who do not find a voyage which lasts several months insupportably dull. Anything is welcome which may break that long monotony —a sail, a shark, an albatross, a man overboard. Most passengers find some resource in eating twice as many meals as on land. But the great devices for killing the time are, quarrelling and flirting. The facilities for both these exciting pursuits are great. The inmates of the ship are thrown together far more than in any country-seat or boarding-house. None can escape from the rest except by imprisoning himself in a cell in which he can hardly turn. All food, all exercise, is taken in company. Ceremony is to a great extent banished. It is every day in the power of a mischievous person to inflict innumerable annoyances; it is every day in the power of an amiable person to confer little services. It not seldom happens that serious distress and danger call forth in genuine beauty and deformity heroic virtues and abject vices, which, in the ordinary intercourse of good society, might remain during many years unknown even to intimate associates. Under such circumstances met Warren Hastings and the Baroness Imhoff; two persons whose accomplishments would have attracted notice in any court of Europe. The gentleman had no domestic ties. The lady was tied to a husband for whom she had no regard, and who had no regard for his own honour. An attachment sprang up, which was soon strengthened by events such as could hardly have occurred on land. Hastings fell ill. The baroness nursed him with womanly tenderness, gave him his medicines with her own hand, and even sate up in his cabin while he slept. Long before the "Duke of Grafton" reached Madras, Hastings was in love. But his love was of a most characteristic description. Like his hatred, like his ambition, like all his

passions, it was strong, but not impetuous. It was calm, deep, earnest, patient of delay, unconquerable by time. Imhoff was called into council by his wife and his wife's lover. It was arranged that the baroness should institute a suit for a divorce in the courts of Franconia; that the baron should afford every facility to the proceeding; and that, during the years which might elapse before the sentence should be pronounced, they should continue to live together. It was also agreed that Hastings should bestow some very substantial marks of gratitude on the complaisant husband; and should, when the marriage was dissolved, make the lady his wife, and adopt the children whom she had already borne to Imhoff.

We are not inclined to judge either Hastings or the baroness severely. There was undoubtedly much to extenuate their fault. But we can by no means concur with the Rev. Mr. Gleig, who carries his partiality to so injudicious an extreme, as to describe the conduct of Imhoff—conduct the baseness of which is the best excuse for the lovers—as "wise and judicious."

At Madras, Hastings found the trade of the Company in a very disorganised state. His own tastes would have led him rather to political than to commercial pursuits; but he knew that the favour of his employers depended chiefly on their dividends, and their dividends depended chiefly on the investment. He therefore, with great judgment, determined to apply his vigorous mind for a time to this department of business; which had been much neglected, since the servants of the Company had ceased to be clerks, and had become warriors and negotiators.

In a very few months he effected an important reform. The Directors notified to him their high approbation, and were so much pleased with his conduct, that they determined to place him at the head of the government of Bengal. Early in 1772 he quitted Fort St. George for his new post.

The Imhoffs, who were still man and wife, accompanied him, and lived at Calcutta "on the same wise and judicious plan" (we quote the words of Mr. Gleig) which they had already followed during more than two years.

When Hastings took his seat at the head of the council-board, Bengal was still governed according to the system which Clive had devised—a system which was, perhaps, skilfully contrived for the purpose of facilitating and concealing a great revolution, but which, when that revolution was complete and irrevocable, could produce nothing but inconvenience. There were two governments, the real and the ostensible. The supreme power belonged to the Company, and was in truth the most despotic power that can be conceived. The only restraint on the English masters of the country was that which their own justice and humanity imposed on them. There was no constitutional check on their will, and resistance to them was utterly hopeless.

But though thus absolute in reality, the English had not yet assumed the style of sovereignty. They held their territories as vassals of the throne of Delhi; they raised their revenues as collectors appointed by the imperial commission; their public seal was inscribed with the imperial titles; and their mint struck only the imperial coin.

There was still a nabob of Bengal, who stood to the English rulers of his country in the same relation in which Augustulus stood to Odoacer, or the last Merovingians to Charles Martel and Pepin. He lived at Moorshedabad, surrounded by princely magnificence. He was approached with the outward marks of reverence, and his name was used in public instruments; but in the government of the country he had less real share than the youngest writer or cadet in the Company's service.

The English council which represented the Company

at Calcutta, was constituted on a very different plan from that which has since been adopted. At present the Governor is, as to all executive measures, absolute. He can declare war, conclude peace, appoint public functionaries or remove them, in opposition to the unanimous sense of those who sit with him in council. They are, indeed, entitled to know all that is done, to discuss all that is done, to advise, to remonstrate, to send home protests. But it is with the governor that the supreme power resides, and on him that the whole responsibility rests. This system, which was introduced by Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas in spite of the strenuous opposition of Mr. Burke, we conceive to be on the whole the best that was ever devised for the government of a country where no materials can be found for a representative constitution. In the time of Hastings the governor had only one vote in council, and, in case of an equal division, a casting vote. It therefore happened not unfrequently that he was overruled on the gravest questions; and it was possible that he might be wholly excluded, for years together, from the real direction of public affairs.

The English functionaries at Fort William had as yet paid little or no attention to the internal government of Bengal. The only branch of politics with which they much busied themselves was negotiation with the native princes. The police, the administration of justice, the details of the collection of revenue, they almost entirely neglected. We may remark that the phraseology of the Company's servants still bears the traces of this state of things. To this day they always use the word "political" as synonymous with "diplomatic." We could name a gentleman still living, who was described by the highest authority as an invaluable public servant, eminently fit to be at the head of the departments of finance, revenue, and

justice, but unfortunately quite ignorant of all political business.

The internal government of Bengal the English rulers delegated to a great native minister, who was stationed at Moorshedabad. All military affairs, and, with the exception of what pertains to mere ceremonial, all foreign affairs, were withdrawn from his control; but the other departments of the administration were entirely confided to him. His own stipend amounted to near a hundred thousand pounds sterling a year. The civil list of the nabobs, amounting to more than three hundred thousand pounds a year, passed through the minister's hands, and was, to a great extent, at his disposal. The collection of the revenue, the superintendence of the household of the prince, the administration of justice, the maintenance of order, were left to this high functionary; and for the exercise of his immense power he was responsible to none but the British masters of the country.

A situation so important, lucrative, and splendid, was naturally an object of ambition to the ablest and most powerful natives. Clive had found it difficult to decide between conflicting pretensions. Two candidates stood out prominently from the crowd, each of them the representative of a race and of a religion.

The one was Mahommed Reza Khan, a Mussulman of Persian extraction, able, active, religious after the fashion of his people, and highly esteemed by them. In England, he might perhaps have been regarded as a corrupt and greedy politician. But tried by the lower standard of Indian morality, he might be considered as a man of integrity and honour.

His competitor was a Hindoo Brahmin, whose name has, by a terrible and melancholy event, been inseparably associated with that of Warren Hastings—the Maharajah

Nuncomar. This man had played an important part in all the revolutions which, since the time of Surajah Dowlah, had taken place in Bengal. To the consideration which in that country belongs to high and pure caste, he added the weight which is derived from wealth, talents, and experience. Of his moral character it is difficult to give a notion to those who are acquainted with human nature only as it appears in our island. What the Italian is to the Englishman, what the Hindoo is to the Italian, what the Bengalee is to other Hindoos, that was Nuncomar to other Bengalees. The physical organisation of the Bengalee is feeble even to effeminacy. He lives in a constant vapour bath. His pursuits are sedentary, his limbs delicate, his movements languid. During many ages he has been trampled upon by men of bolder and more hearty breeds. Courage, independence, veracity, are qualities to which his constitution and his situation are equally unfavourable. His mind bears a singular analogy to his body. It is weak even to helplessness, for purposes of manly resistance; but its suppleness and its tact move the children of sterner climates to admiration not unmingled with contempt. All those arts which are the natural defence of the weak, are more familiar with this subtle race than to the Ionian of the times of Juvenal, or to the Jew of the dark ages. What the horns are to the buffalo, what the paw is to the tiger, what the sting is to the bee, what beauty, according to the old Greek song, is to woman, deceit is to the Bengalee. Large promises, smooth excuses, elaborate tissues of circumstantial falsehood, chicanery, perjury, forgery, are the weapons, offensive and defensive, of the people of the Lower Ganges. All those millions do not furnish one sepoy to the armies of the Company. But as usurers, as money-changers, as sharp legal practitioners, no class of human beings can bear a comparison with them.

With all his softness, the Bengalee is by no means placable in his enmities, or prone to pity. The pertinacity with which he adheres to his purposes, yields only to the immediate pressure of fear. Nor does he lack a certain kind of courage which is often wanting in his masters. To inevitable evils he is sometimes found to oppose a passive fortitude, such as the Stoics attributed to their ideal sage. An European warrior who rushes on a battery of cannon with a loud hurrah, will shriek under the surgeon's knife, and fall into an agony of despair at the sentence of death. But the Bengalee would see his country overrun, his house laid in ashes, his children murdered or dishonoured, without having the spirit to strike one blow, he has yet been known to endure torture with the firmness of Mucius, and to mount the scaffold with the steady step and even pulse of Algernon Sydney.

In Nuncomar, the national character was strongly and with exaggeration personified. The Company's servants had repeatedly detected him in the most criminal intrigues. On one occasion he brought a false charge against another Hindoo, and tried to substantiate it by producing forged documents. On another occasion it was discovered that, while professing the strongest attachment to the English, he was engaged in several conspiracies against them; and in particular that he was the medium of a correspondence between the court of Delhi and the French authorities in the Carnatic. For these and similar practices, he had been long detained in confinement. But his talents and influence had not only procured his liberation, but had obtained for him a certain degree of consideration even among the British rulers of his country.

Clive was extremely unwilling to place a Mussulman at the head of the administration of Bengal. On the other hand, he could not bring himself to confer immense power

on a man to whom every sort of villany had repeatedly been brought home. Therefore, though the nabob, over whom Nuncomar had by intrigue acquired great influence, begged that the artful Hindoo might be intrusted with the government, Clive, after some hesitation, decided honestly and wisely in favour of Mahommed Reza Khan, who had held his high office seven years when Hastings became Governor. An infant son of Meer Jaffier was now nabob; and the guardianship of the young Prince's person had been confined to the minister.

Nuncomar, stimulated at once by cupidity and malice, had been constantly attempting to undermine his successful rival. This was not difficult. The revenues of Bengal, under the administration established by Clive, did not yield such a surplus as had been anticipated by the company; for, at that time, the most absurd notions were entertained in England respecting the wealth of India. Palaces of porphyry, hung with the richest brocade, heaps of pearls and diamonds, vaults from which pagodas and gold mohurs were measured out by the bushel, filled the imagination even of men of business. Nobody seemed to be aware of what nevertheless was most undoubtedly the truth, that India was a much poorer country than countries which in Europe are reckoned poor—than Ireland, for example, than Portugal, or than Sweden. It was confidently believed by Lords of the Treasury and Members for the City, that Bengal would not only defray its own charges, but would afford an increased dividend to the proprietors of Indian stock, and large relief to the English finances. These absurd expectations were disappointed; and the directors, naturally enough, chose to attribute the disappointment rather to the mismanagement of Mahommed Reza Khan, than to their own ignorance of the country intrusted to their care. They were confirmed in their error by the agents of Nuncomar;

for Nuncomar had agents even in Leadenhall Street. Soon after Hastings reached Calcutta, he received a letter addressed by the Court of Directors, not to the council generally, but to himself in particular. He was directed to remove Mahommed Reza Khan, to arrest him, together with all his family and all his partisans, and to institute a strict inquiry into the whole administration of the province. It was added, that the Governor would do well to avail himself of the assistance of Nuncomar in the investigation. The vices of Nuncomar were acknowledged. But even from his vices, it was said, much advantage might at such a conjuncture be derived; and, though he could not safely be trusted, it might still be proper to encourage him by hopes of reward.

The Governor bore no good-will to Nuncomar. Many years before, they had known each other at Moorshedabad; and then a quarrel had risen between them, which all the authority of their superiors could hardly compose. Widely as they differed in most points, they resembled each other in this, that both were men of unforgiving natures. To Mahommed Reza Khan, on the other hand, Hastings had no feelings of hostility. Nevertheless he proceeded to execute the instructions of the Company with an alacrity which he never showed, except when instructions were in perfect conformity with his own views. He had, wisely as we think, determined to get rid of the system of double government in Bengal. The orders of the directors furnished him with the means of effecting his purpose, and dispensed him from the necessity of discussing the matter with his council. He took his measures with his usual vigour and dexterity. At midnight, the palace of Mahommed Reza Khan, at Moorshedabad, was surrounded by a battalion of sepoys. The minister was roused from his slumbers and informed that he was a prisoner. With the Mussulman

gravity, he bent his head and submitted himself to the will of God. He fell not alone. A chief named Schitab Roy had been intrusted with the government of Bahar. His valour and his attachment to the English had more than once been signally proved. On that memorable day on which the people of Patna saw from their walls the whole army of the Mogul scattered by the little band of Captain Knox, the voice of the British conquerors assigned the palm of gallantry to the brave Asiatic. "I never," said Knox, when he introduced Schitab Roy, covered with blood and dust, to the English functionaries assembled in the factory—"I never saw a native fight so before." Schitab Roy was involved in the ruin of Mahommed Reza Khan, was deprived of his government, and was placed under arrest. The members of the council received no intimation of these measures till the prisoners were on their road to Calcutta.

The inquiry into the conduct of the minister was postponed on different pretences. He was detained in an easy confinement during many months. In the mean time the great revolution which Hastings had planned was carried into effect. The office of minister was abolished. The internal administration was transferred to the servants of the Company. A system—a very imperfect system it is true—of civil and criminal justice, under English superintendence, was established. The nabob was no longer to have even an ostensible share in the government; but he was still to receive a considerable annual allowance, and to be surrounded with the state of sovereignty. As he was an infant, it was necessary to provide guardians for his person and property. His person was intrusted to a lady of his father's harem, known by the name of the Munny Begum. The office of treasurer of the household was bestowed on a son of Nuncomar, named Goordas. Nuncomar's services were wanted, yet he could not safely be trusted with power;

and Hastings thought it a master stroke of policy to reward the able and unprincipled parent by promoting the inoffensive child.

The revolution completed, the double government dissolved, the Company installed in the full sovereignty of Bengal, Hastings had no motive to treat the late ministers with rigour. Their trial had been put off on various pleas till the new organisation was complete. They were then brought before a committee, over which the Governor presided. Schitab Roy was speedily acquitted with honour. A formal apology was made to him for the restraint to which he had been subjected. All the Eastern marks of respect were bestowed on him. He was clothed in a robe of honour, presented with jewels and with a richly harnessed elephant, and sent back in state to Patna. But his health had suffered from confinement; his high spirit had been cruelly wounded; and soon after his liberation he died of a broken heart.

The innocence of Mahommed Reza Khan was not so clearly established. But the Governor was not disposed to deal harshly. After a long hearing, in which Nuncomar appeared as the accuser, and displayed both the art and the inveterate rancour which distinguished him, Hastings pronounced that the charges had not been made out, and ordered the fallen minister to be set at liberty.

Nuncomar had proposed to destroy the Mussulman administration, and to rise on its ruins. Both his malevolence and his cupidity had been disappointed. Hastings had made him a tool—had used him for the purpose of accomplishing the transfer of the government from Moorshedabad to Calcutta, from native to European hands. The rival, the enemy, so long envied, so implacably persecuted, had been dismissed unhurt. The situation so long and ardently desired had been abolished. It was natural that the Go-

vernor should be from that time an object of the most intense hatred to the vindictive Brahmin. As yet, however, it was necessary to suppress such feelings. The time was coming when that long animosity was to end in a desperate and deadly struggle.

In the mean time, Hastings was compelled to turn his attention to foreign affairs. The object of his diplomacy was at this time simply to get money. The finances of his government were in an embarrassed state; and this embarrassment he was determined to relieve by some means, fair or foul. The principle which directed all his dealings with his neighbours is fully expressed by the old motto of one of the great predatory families of Teviotdale—"Thou shalt want ere I want." He seems to have laid it down, as a fundamental proposition which could not be disputed, that when he had not as many lacs of rupees as the public service required, he was to take them from anybody who had. One thing, indeed, is to be said in excuse for him. The pressure applied to him by his employers at home, was such as only the highest virtue could have withstood—such as left him no choice except to commit great wrongs, or to resign his high post, and with that post all his hopes of fortune and distinction. It is perfectly true, that the directors never enjoined or applauded any crime. Far from it. Whoever examines their letters at that time, will find there many just and humane sentiments, many excellent precepts; in short, an admirable circle of political ethics. But every exhortation is modified or nullified by a demand for money. "Govern leniently, and send more money; practise strict justice and moderation towards neighbouring powers, and send more money;" this is in truth the sum of almost all the instructions that Hastings ever received from home. Now, these instructions being interpreted, mean simply, "Be the father and the oppressor of the people; be just and unjust, mo-

derate and rapacious." The directors dealt with India, as the church, in the good old times, dealt with a heretic. They delivered the victim over to the executioners, with an earnest request that all possible tenderness might be shown. We by no means accuse or suspect those who framed these despatches of hypocrisy. It is probable that, writing fifteen thousand miles from the place where their orders were to be carried into effect, they never perceived the gross inconsistency of which they were guilty. But the inconsistency was at once manifest to their lieutenant at Calcutta, who, with an empty treasury, with an unpaid army, with his own salary often in arrear, with deficient crops, with government tenants daily running away, was called upon to remit home another half million without fail. Hastings saw that it was absolutely necessary for him to disregard either the moral discourses or the pecuniary requisitions of his employers. Being forced to disobey them in something, he had to consider what kind of disobedience they would most readily pardon, and he correctly judged, that the safest course would be to neglect the Sermons and to find the Rupees.

A mind so fertile as his, and so little restrained by conscientious scruples, speedily discovered several modes of relieving the financial embarrassments of the government. The allowance of the Nabob of Bengal was reduced at a stroke from £320,000 a year to half that sum. The Company had bound itself to pay nearly £300,000 a year to the Great Mogul, as a mark of homage for the provinces which he had intrusted to their care; and they had ceded to him the districts of Corah and Allahabad. On the plea that the Mogul was not really independent, but merely a tool in the hands of others, Hastings determined to retract these concessions. He accordingly declared that the English would pay no more tribute, and sent troops to occupy Allahabad

and Corah. The situation of these places was such, that there would be little advantage and great expense in retaining them. Hastings, who wanted money and not territory, determined to sell them. A purchaser was not wanting. The rich province of Oude had, in the general dissolution of the Mogul Empire, fallen to the share of the great Mussulman house, by which it is still governed. About twenty years ago, this house, by the permission of the British government, assumed the royal title; but, in the time of Warren Hastings, such an assumption would have been considered by the Mahommedans of India as a monstrous impiety. The Prince of Oude, though he held the power, did not venture to use the style of sovereignty. To the appellation of nabob or viceroy, he added that of vizier of the monarchy of Hindostan—just as in the last century the electors of Saxony and Brandenburg, though independent of the Emperor, and often in arms against him, were proud to style themselves his Grand Chamberlain and Grand Marshal. Sujah Dowlah, then nabob vizier, was on excellent terms with the English. He had a large treasure. Allahabad and Corah were so situated that they might be of use to him, and could be of none to the Company. The buyer and seller soon came to an understanding; and the provinces which had been torn from the Mogul were made over to the government of Oude for about half a million sterling.

But there was another matter still more important to be settled by the vizier and the Governor. The fate of a brave people was to be decided. It was decided in a manner which has left a lasting stain on the fame of Hastings and of England.

The people of central Asia had always been to the inhabitants of India, what the warriors of the German forests were to the subjects of the decaying monarchy of Rome. The dark, slender, and timid Hindoo shrank from a conflict

with the strong muscle and resolute spirit of the fair race, which dwelt beyond the passes. There is reason to believe that, at a period anterior to the dawn of regular history, the people who spoke the rich and flexible Sanscrit came from regions lying far beyond the Hyphasis and the Hystaspes, and imposed their yoke on the children of the soil. It is certain that, during the last ten centuries, a succession of invaders descended from the west on Hindostan; nor was the course of conquest ever turned back towards the setting sun, till that memorable campaign, in which the cross of Saint George was planted on the walls of Ghizni.

The emperors of Hindostan themselves came from the other side of the great mountain ridge: and it had always been their practice to recruit their army from the hardy and valiant race from which their own illustrious house sprang. Among the military adventurers who were allured to the Mogul standards from the neighbourhood of Cabul and Candahar, were conspicuous several gallant bands, known by the name of the Rohillas. Their services had been rewarded with large tracts of land—fiefs of the spear, if we may use an expression drawn from an analogous state of things—in that fertile plain through which the Ramgunga flows from the snowy heights of Kumaon to join the Ganges. In the general confusion which followed the death of Aurungzebe, the warlike colony became virtually independent. The Rohillas were distinguished from the other inhabitants of India by a peculiarly fair complexion. They were more honourably distinguished by valour in war, and by skill in the arts of peace. While anarchy raged from Lahore to Cape Comorin, their little territory enjoyed the blessings of repose under the guardianship of courage. Agriculture and commerce flourished among them; nor were they negligent of rhetoric and poetry. Many persons now living have heard aged men talk with regret of the

golden days, when the Afghan princes ruled in the vale of Rohilcund.

Sujah Dowlah had set his heart on adding this rich district to his own principality. Right, or show of right, he had absolutely none. His claim was in no respect better founded than that of Catherine to Poland, or that of the Bonaparte family to Spain. The Rohillas held their country by exactly the same title by which he held his; and had governed their country far better than his had ever been governed. Nor were they a people whom it was perfectly safe to attack. Their land was indeed an open plain, destitute of natural defences; but their veins were full of the high blood of Afghanistan. As soldiers, they had not the steadiness which is seldom found except in company with strict discipline; but their impetuous valour had been proved on many fields of battle. It was said that their chiefs, when united by common peril, could bring eighty thousand men into the field. Sujah Dowlah had himself seen them fight, and wisely shrank from a conflict with them. There was in India one army, and only one, against which even those proud Caucasian tribes could not stand. It had been abundantly proved that neither tenfold odds, nor the martial ardour of the boldest Asiatic nations, could avail aught against English science and resolution. Was it possible to induce the governor of Bengal to let out to hire the irresistible energies of the imperial people—the skill, against which the ablest chiefs of Hindostan were helpless as infants—the discipline, which had so often triumphed over the frantic struggles of fanaticism and despair—the unconquerable British courage which is never so sedate and stubborn as towards the close of a doubtful and murderous day?

This was what the Nabob Vizier asked, and what Hastings granted. A bargain was soon struck. Each of the Negotiators had what the other wanted. Hastings was in

need of funds to carry on the government of Bengal, and to send remittances to London; and Sujah Dowlah had an ample revenue. Sujah Dowlah was bent on subjugating the Rohillas; and Hastings had at his disposal the only force by which the Rohillas could be subjugated. It was agreed that an English army should be lent to the Nabob Vizier, and that, for the loan, he should pay £400,000 sterling, besides defraying all the charge of the troops while employed in his service.

"I really cannot see," says the Rev. Mr. Gleig, "upon what grounds, either of political or moral justice, this proposition deserves to be stigmatised as infamous." If we understand the meaning of words, it is infamous to commit a wicked action for hire, and it is wicked to engage in war without provocation. In this particular war, scarcely one aggravating circumstance was wanting. The object of the Rohilla war was this—to deprive a large population, who had never done us the least harm, of a good government, and to place them, against their will, under an execrably bad one. Nay, even this is not all. England now descended far below the level even of those petty German princes, who, about the same time, sold us troops to fight the Americans. The hussar-mongers of Hesse and Anspach had at least the assurance that the expeditions on which their soldiers were to be employed, would be conducted in conformity with the humane rules of civilised warfare. Was the Rohilla war likely to be so conducted? Did the Governor stipulate that it should be so conducted? He well knew what Indian warfare was. He well knew that the power which he covenanted to put into Sujah Dowlah's hands, would, in all probability, be atrociously abused; and he required no guarantee, no promise that it should not be so abused. He did not even reserve to himself the right of withdrawing his aid in case of abuse, however gross. Mr.

Gleig repeats Major Scott's absurd plea that Hastings was justified in letting out English troops to slaughter the Rohillas, because the Rohillas were not of Indian race, but a colony from a distant country. What were the English themselves? Was it for them to proclaim a crusade for the expulsion of all intruders from the countries watered by the Ganges? Did it lie in their mouths to contend that a foreign settler, who establishes an empire in India, is a *caput lupinum?* What would they have said if any other power had on such a ground, attacked Madras or Calcutta, without the slightest provocation? Such a defence was wanting to make the infamy of the transaction complete. The atrocity of the crime, and the hypocrisy of the apology, are worthy of each other.

One of the three brigades of which the Bengal army consisted, was sent under Colonel Champion to join Sujah Dowlah's forces. The Rohillas expostulated, entreated, offered a large ransom, but in vain. They then resolved to defend themselves to the last. A bloody battle was fought. "The enemy," says Colonel Champion, "gave proof of a good share of military knowledge; and it is impossible to describe a more obstiuate firmness of resolution than they displayed." The dastardly sovereign of Oude fled from the field. The English were left unsupported; but their fire and their charge were irresistible. It was not, however, till the most distinguished chiefs had fallen, fighting bravely at the head of their troops, that the Rohilla ranks gave way. Then the Nabob Vizier and his rabble made their appearance, and hastened to plunder the camp of the valiant enemies, whom they had never dared to look in the face. The soldiers of the company, trained in an exact discipline, kept unbroken order, while the tents were pillaged by these worthless allies. But many voices were heard to exclaim, "We have had all the fighting, and these rogues are to have all the profit."

Then the horrors of Indian war were let loose on the fair valleys and cities of Rohilcund. The whole country was in a blaze. More than a hundred thousand people fled from their homes to pestilential jungles, preferring famine and fever, and the haunts of tigers, to the tyranny of him, to whom an English and a Christian government had, for shameful lucre, sold their substance and their blood, and the honour of their wives and daughters. Colonel Champion remonstrated with the Nabob Vizier, and sent strong representations to Fort William; but the Governor had made no conditions as to the mode in which the war was to be carried on. He had troubled himself about nothing but his forty lacs; and, though he might disapprove of Sujah Dowlah's wanton barbarity, he did not think himself entitled to interfere, except by offering advice. This delicacy excites the admiration of the reverend biographer. "Mr. Hastings," he says, "could not himself dictate to the Nabob, nor permit the commander of the Company's troops to dictate how the war was to be carried on." No, to be sure. Mr. Hastings had only to put down by main force the brave struggles of innocent men fighting for their liberty. Their military resistance crushed, his duties ended; and he had then only to fold his arms and look on, while their villages were burned, their children butchered, and their women violated. Will Mr. Gleig seriously maintain this opinion? Is any rule more plain than this, that whoever voluntarily gives to another irresistible power over human beings, is bound to take order that such power shall not be barbarously abused? But we beg pardon of our readers for arguing a point so clear.

We hasten to the end of this sad and disgraceful story. The war has ceased. The finest population in India was subjected to a greedy, cowardly, cruel tyrant. Commerce and agriculture languished. The rich province which had

tempted the cupidity of Sujah Dowlah, became the most miserable part even of his miserable dominions. Yet is the injured nation not yet extinct. At long intervals gleams of its ancient spirit have flashed forth; and even at this day, valour, and self-respect, and a chivalrous feeling, rare among Asiatics, and the bitter remembrance of the great crime of England, distinguish that noble Afghan race. To this day they are regarded as the best of all sepoys at the cold steel; and it was recently remarked by one who had enjoyed great opportunities of observation, that the only natives of India to whom the word "gentlemen" can with perfect propriety be applied, are to be found among the Rohillas.

Whatever we may think of the morality of Hastings, it cannot be denied that the financial results of his policy did honour to his talents. In less than two years after he assumed the government, he had, without imposing any additional burdens on the people subject to his authority, added about £450,000 to the annual income of the Company, besides procuring about a million in ready money. He had also relieved the finances of Bengal from military expenditure, amounting to near £250,000 a year, and had thrown that charge on the Nabob of Oude. There can be no doubt that this was a result which, if it had been obtained by honest means, would have entitled him to the warmest gratitude of his country; and which, by whatever means obtained, proved that he possessed great talents for administration.

In the mean time, Parliament had been engaged in long and grave discussions on Indian affairs. The ministry of Lord North, in the session of 1773, introduced a measure which made a considerable change in the constitution of the Indian government. This law, known by the name of the Regulating Act, provided that the presidency of Bengal

should exercise a control over the other possessions of the Company; that the chief of that presidency should be styled Governor-General; that he should be assisted by four councillors; and that a supreme court of judicature, consisting of a chief justice and three inferior judges, should be established at Calcutta. This court was made independent of the Governor-General and council, and was intrusted with a civil and criminal jurisdiction of immense and, at the same time, of undefined extent.

The Governor-General and councillors were named in the act, and were to hold their situations for five years. Hastings was to be the first Governor-General. One of the four new councillors, Mr. Barwell, an experienced servant of the Company, was then in India. The other three, General Clavering, Mr. Monson, and Mr. Francis, were sent out from England.

The ablest of the new councillors was, beyond all doubt, Philip Francis. His acknowledged compositions prove that he possessed considerable eloquence and information. Several years passed in the public offices had formed him to habits of business. His enemies have never denied that he had a fearless and manly spirit; and his friends, we are afraid, must acknowledge that his estimate of himself was extravagantly high, that his temper was irritable, that his deportment was often rude and petulant, and that his hatred was of intense bitterness, and long duration.

It is scarcely possible to mention this eminent man without adverting for a moment to the question which his name at once suggests to every mind. Was he the author of the Letters of Junius? Our own firm belief is, that he was. The external evidence is, we think, such as would support a verdict in a civil, nay, in a criminal proceeding. The handwriting of Junius is the very peculiar handwriting of Francis, slightly disguised. As to the position, pursuits,

and connections of Junius, the following are the most important facts which can be considered as clearly proved: first, that he was acquainted with the technical forms of the secretary of the state's office; secondly, that he was intimately acquainted with the business of the war-office; thirdly, that he, during the year 1770, attended debates in the House of Lords, and took notes of speeches, particularly of the speeches of Lord Chatham; fourthly, that he bitterly resented the appointment of Mr. Chamier to the place of deputy secretary-at-war; fifthly, that he was bound by some strong tie to the first Lord Holland. Now, Francis passed some years in the secretary of state's office. He was subsequently chief clerk of the war-office. He repeatedly mentioned that he had himself, in 1770, heard speeches of Lord Chatham; and some of those speeches were actually printed from his notes. He resigned his clerkship at the war-office from resentment at the appointment of Mr. Chamier. It was by Lord Holland that he was first introduced into the public service. Now here are five marks, all of which ought to be found in Junius. They are all five found in Francis. We do not believe that more than two of them can be found in any other person whatever. If this argument does not settle the question, there is an end of all reasoning on circumstantial evidence.

The internal evidence seems to us to point the same way. The style of Francis bears a strong resemblance to that of Junius; nor are we disposed to admit, what is generally taken for granted, that the acknowledged compositions of Francis are very decidedly inferior to the anonymous letters. The argument from inferiority, at all events, is one which may be urged with at least equal force against every claimant that has ever been mentioned, with the single exception of Burke, who certainly was not Junius. And what conclusion, after all, can be drawn from mere infe-

riority? Every writer must produce his best work; and the interval between his best work and his second best work may be very wide indeed. Nobody will say that the best letters of Junius are more decidedly superior to the acknowledged works of Francis, than three or four of Corneille's tragedies to the rest; than three or four of Ben Jonson's comedies to the rest; than the Pilgrim's Progress to the other works of Bunyan; than Don Quixote to the other works of Cervantes. Nay, it is certain that the Man in the Mask, whoever he may have been, was a most unequal writer. To go no further than the letters which bear the signature of Junius;—the letter to the king, and the letters to Horne Tooke, have little in common, except the asperity; and asperity was an ingredient seldom wanting either in the writings or in the speeches of Francis.

Indeed, one of the strongest reasons for believing that Francis was Junius, is the moral resemblance between the two men. It is not difficult, from the letters which, under various signatures, are known to have been written by Junius, and from his dealings with Woodfall and others, to form a tolerably correct notion of his character. He was clearly a man not destitute of real patriotism and magnanimity—a man whose vices were not of a sordid kind. But he must also have been a man in the highest degree arrogant and insolent, a man prone to malevolence, and prone to the error of mistaking his malevolence for public virtue. "Doest thou well to be angry?" was the question asked in old time of the Hebrew prophet. And he answered, "I do well." This was evidently the temper of Junius; and to this cause we attribute the savage cruelty which disgraces several of his letters. No man is so merciless as he who, under a strong self-delusion, confounds his antipathies with his duties. It may be added, that Junius, though allied with the democratic party by common enmities, was the

very opposite of a democratic politician. While attacking individuals with a ferocity which perpetually violated all the laws of literary warfare, he regarded the most defective parts of old institutions with a respect amounting to pedantry;—pleaded the cause of Old Sarum with fervour, and contemptuously told the capitalists of Manchester and Leeds, that, if they wanted votes, they might buy land and become freeholders of Lancashire and Yorkshire. All this, we believe, might stand, with scarcely any change, for a character of Philip Francis.

It is not strange that the great anonymous writer should have been willing at that time to leave the country which had been so powerfully stirred by his eloquence. Everything had gone against him. That party which he clearly preferred to every other, the party of George Grenville, had been scattered by the death of its chief; and Lord Suffolk had led the greater part of it over to the ministerial benches. The ferment produced by the Middlesex election had gone down. Every faction must have been alike an object of aversion to Junius. His opinions on domestic affairs separated him from the ministry; his opinions on colonial affairs from the opposition. Under such circumstances, he had thrown down his pen in misanthropic despair. His farewell letter to Woodfall bears date the 19th of January, 1773. In that letter, he declared that he must be an idiot to write again; that he had meant well by the cause and the public; that both were given up; that there were not ten men who would act steadily together on any question. "But it is all alike," he added, "vile and contemptible. You have never flinched that I know of; and I shall always rejoice to hear of your prosperity." These were the last words of Junius. In a year from that time, Philip Francis was on his voyage to Bengal.

With the three new councillors came out the judges of

the Supreme Court. The chief-justice was Sir Elijah Impey. He was an old acquaintance of Hastings; and it is probable that the Governor-General, if he had searched through all the inns of court, could not have found an equally serviceable tool. But the members of council were by no means in an obsequious mood. Hastings greatly disliked the new form of government, and had no very high opinion of his coadjutors. They had heard of this, and were disposed to be suspicious and punctilious. When men are in such a frame of mind, any trifle is sufficient to give occasion for dispute. The members of council expected a salute of twenty-one guns from the batteries of Fort William. Hastings allowed them only seventeen. They landed in ill-humour. The first civilities were exchanged with cold reserve. On the morrow commenced that long quarrel which, after distracting British India, was renewed in England, and in which all the most eminent statesmen and orators of the age took active part on one or the other side.

Hastings was supported by Barwell. They had not always been friends. But the arrival of the new members of council from England, naturally had the effect of uniting the old servants of the Company. Clavering, Monson, and Francis formed the majority. They instantly wrested the government out of the hands of Hastings; condemned, certainly not without justice, his late dealings with the Nabob Vizier; recalled the English agent from Oude, and sent thither a creature of their own; ordered the brigade which had conquered the unhappy Rohillas to return to the Company's territories; and instituted a severe inquiry into the conduct of the war. Next, in spite of the Governor-General's romonstrances, they proceeded to exercise, in the most indiscreet manner, their new authority over the subordinate presidencies; threw all the affairs of Bombay into

confusion; and interfered, with an incredible union of rashness and feebleness, in the intestine disputes of the Mahratta government. At the same time, they fell on the internal administration of Bengal, and attacked the whole fiscal and judicial system—a system which was undoubtedly defective, but which it was very improbable that gentlemen fresh from England would be competent to amend. The effect of their reforms was, that all protection to life and property was withdrawn; and that gangs of robbers plundered and slaughtered with impunity in the very suburbs of Calcutta. Hastings continued to live in the Government-house, and to draw the salary of Governor-General. He continued even to take the lead at the conucil-board in the transaction of ordinary business; for his opponents could not but feel that he knew much of which they were ignorant, and that he decided, both surely and speedily, many questions which to them would have been hopelessly puzzling. But the higher powers of government, and the most valuable patronage, had been taken from him.

The natives soon found this out. They considered him as a fallen man; and they acted after their kind. Some of our readers may have seen, in India, a cloud of crows pecking a sick vulture to death—no bad type of what happens in that country, as often as fortune deserts one who has been great and dreaded. In an instant, all the sycophants who had lately been ready to lie for him, to forge for him, to pander for him, to poison for him, hasten to purchase the favour of his victorious enemies by accusing him. An Indian government has only to let it be understood that it wishes a particular man to be ruined; and, in twenty-four hours, it will be furnished with grave charges, supported by depositions so full and circumstantial, that any person unaccustomed to Asiatic mendacity would regard them as decisive. It is well if the signature of the destined victim

is not counterfeited at the foot of some illegal compact, and if some treasonable paper is not slipped into a hiding-place in his house. Hastings was now regarded as helpless. The power to make or mar the fortune of every man in Bengal had passed, as it seemed, into the hands of his opponents. Immediately charges against the Governor-General began to pour in. They were eagerly welcomed by the majority, who, to do them justice, were men of too much honour knowingly to countenance false accusations; but who were not sufficiently acquainted with the East to be aware that, in that part of the world, a very little encouragement from power will call forth, in a week, more Oateses, and Bedloes, and Dangerfields, than Westminster Hall sees in a century.

It would have been strange, indeed, if, at such a juncture, Nuncomar had remained quiet. That bad man was stimulated at once by malignity, by avarice, and by ambition. Now was the time to be avenged on his old enemy, to wreak a grudge of seventeen years, to establish himself in the favour of the majority of the Council, to become the greatest native in Bengal. From the time of the arrival of the new councillors, he had paid the most marked court to them; and had in consequence been excluded, with all indignity, from the Government-house. He now put into the hands of Francis, with great ceremony, a paper containing several charges of the most serious description. By this document Hastings was accused of putting offices up to sale, and of receiving bribes for suffering offenders to escape. In particular, it was alleged that Mohammed Reza Khan had been dismissed with impunity, in consideration of a great sum paid to the Governor-General.

Francis read the paper in Council. A violent altercation followed. Hastings complained in bitter terms of the way in which he was treated, spoke with contempt of Nunco-

mar and of Nuncomar's accusation, and denied the right of the council to sit in judgment on the governor. At the next meeting of the Board, another communication from Nuncomar was produced. He requested that he might be permitted to attend the council, and that he might be heard in support of his assertions. Another tempestuous debate took place. The Governor-General maintained that the council-room was not a proper place for such an investigation; that from persons who were heated by daily conflict with him, he could not expect the fairness of judges; and that he could not, without betraying the dignity of his post, submit to be confronted with such a man as Nuncomar. The majority, however, resolved to go into the charges. Hastings rose, declared the sitting at an end, and left the room, followed by Barwell. The other members kept their seats, voted themselves a council, put Clavering in the chair, and ordered Nuncomar to be called in. Nuncomar not only adhered to the original charges, but, after the fashion of the East, produced a large supplement. He stated that Hastings had received a great sum for appointing Rajah Goordas treasurer of the Nabob's household, and for committing the care of his highness's person to the Munny Begum. He put in a letter purporting to bear the seal of the Munny Begum, for the purpose of establishing the truth of his story. The seal, whether forged, as Hastings affirmed, or genuine, as we are rather inclined to believe, proved nothing. Nuncomar, as everybody knows who knows India, had only to tell the Munny Begum that such a letter would give pleasure to the majority of the council, in order to procure her attestation. The majority, however, voted that the charge was made out; that Hastings had corruptly received between thirty and forty thousand pounds; and that he ought to be compelled to refund.

The general feeling among the English in Bengal was

strongly in favour of the Governor-General. In talents for business, in knowledge of the country, in general courtesy of demeanour, he was decidedly superior to his persecutors. The servants of the Company were naturally disposed to side with the most distinguished member of their own body against a War-office clerk, who, profoundly ignorant of the native languages and the native characters, took on himself to regulate every department of the administration. Hastings, however, in spite of the general sympathy of his countrymen, was in a most painful situation. There was still an appeal to higher authority in England. If that authority took part with his enemies, nothing was left to him but to throw up his office. He accordingly placed his resignation in the hands of his agent in London, Colonel Macleane. But Macleane was instructed not to produce the resignation, unless it should be fully ascertained that the feeling at the India House was adverse to the Governor-General.

The triumph of Nuncomar seemed to be complete. He held a daily levee, to which his countrymen resorted in crowds; and to which, on one occasion, the majority of the Council condescended to repair. His house was an office for the purpose of receiving charges against the Governor-General. It was said that, partly by threats, and partly by wheedling, he had induced many of the wealthiest men of the province to send in complaints. But he was playing a desperate game. It was not safe to drive to despair a man of such resource and of such determination as Hastings. Nuncomar, with all his acuteness, did not understand the nature of the institutions under which he lived. He saw that he had with him the majority of the body which made treaties, gave places, raised taxes. The separation between political and judicial functions was a thing of which he had no conception. It had probably never occurred to him

that there was in Bengal an authority perfectly independent of the council—an authority which could protect one whom the council wished to destroy, and send to the gibbet one whom the council wished to protect. Yet such was the fact. The Supreme Court was, within the sphere of its own duties, altogether independent of the Government. Hastings, with his usual sagacity, had seen how much advantage he might derive from possessing himself of this stronghold; and he had acted accordingly. The Judges, especially the Chief Justice, were hostile to the majority of the council. The time had now come for putting this formidable machinery in action.

On a sudden, Calcutta was astounded by the news that Nuncomar had been taken up on a charge of felony, committed, and thrown into the common jail. The crime imputed to him was, that six years before he had forged a bond. The ostensible prosecutor was a native. But it was then, and still is, the opinion of everybody—idiots and biographers excepted—that Hastings was the real mover in the business.

The rage of the majority rose to the highest point. They protested against the proceedings of the Supreme Court, and sent several urgent messengers to the Judges, demanding that Nuncomar should be admitted to bail. The Judges returned haughty and resolute answers. All that the Council could do, was to heap honours and emoluments on the family of Nuncomar; and this they did. In the mean time, the assizes commenced; a true bill was found; and Nuncomar was brought before Sir Elijah Impey and a jury, composed of Englishmen. A great quantity of contradictory swearing, and the necessity of having every word of the evidence interpreted, protracted the trial to a most unusual length. At last, a verdict of guilty was returned, and the Chief Justice pronounced sentence of death on the prisoner.

Mr. Gleig is so strangely ignorant as to imagine, that the Judges had no further discretion in the case; and that the power of extending mercy to Nuncomar resided with the Council. He therefore throws on Francis, and Francis's party, the whole blame of what followed. We should have thought that a gentleman who has published five or six bulky volumes on Indian affairs, might have taken the trouble to inform himself as to the fundamental principles of the Indian government. The Supreme Court had, under the Regulating Act, the power to respite criminals till the pleasure of the Crown should be known. The Council had, at that time, no power to interfere.

That Impey ought to have respited Nuncomar, we hold to be perfectly clear. Whether the whole proceeding was not illegal, is a question. But it is certain that, whatever may have been, according to technical rules of construction, the effect of the statute under which the trial took place, it was most unjust to hang a Hindoo for forgery. The law which made forgery capital in England, was passed without the smallest reference to the state of society in India. It was unknown to the natives of India. It had never been put in execution among them—certainly not for want of delinquents. It was in the highest degree shocking to all their notions. They were not accustomed to the distinction which many circumstances, peculiar to our own state of society, have led us to make between forgery and other kinds of cheating. The counterfeiting of a seal was, in their estimation, a common act of swindling; nor had it ever crossed their minds that it was to be punished as severely as gang-robbery or assassination. A just judge would, beyond all doubt, have reserved the case for the consideration of the sovereign. But Impey would not hear of mercy or delay.

The excitement among all classes was great. Francis,

and Francis's few English adherents, described the Governor-General, and the Chief Justice, as the worst of murderers. Clavering, it was said, swore that, even at the foot of the gallows, Nuncomar should be rescued. The bulk of the European society, though strongly attached to the Governor-General, could not but feel compassion for a man, who, with all his crimes, had so long filled so large a space in their sight—who had been great and powerful before the British empire in India began to exist—and to whom, in the old times, governors and members of council, then mere commercial factors, had paid court for protection. The feeling of the Hindoos was infinitely stronger. They were, indeed, not a people to strike one blow for their countryman. But his sentence filled them with sorrow and dismay. Tried even by their low standard of morality, he was a bad man. But, bad as he was, he was the head of their race and religion—a Brahmin of the Brahmins. He had inherited the purist and highest caste. He had practised, with the greatest punctuality, all those ceremonies to which the superstitious Bengalees ascribed far more importance than to the correct discharge of the social duties. They felt, therefore, as a devout Catholic in the dark ages would have felt, at seeing a prelate of the highest dignity sent to the gallows by a secular tribunal. According to their old national laws, a Brahmin could not be put to death for any crime whatever. And the crime for which Nuncomar was about to die, was regarded by them in much the same light in which the selling of an unsound horse, for a sound price, is regarded by a Yorkshire jockey.

The Mahommedans alone appear to have seen with exultation the fate of the powerful Hindoo, who had attempted to rise by means of the ruin of Mahommed Reza Khan. The Mussulman historian of those times takes delight in aggravating the charge. He assures us, that in Nunco-

mar's house a casket was found containing counterfeits of the seals of all the richest men of the province. We have never fallen in with any other authority for this story, which, in itself, is by no means improbable.

The day drew near, and Nuncomar prepared himself to die, with that quiet fortitude with which the Bengalee, so effeminately timid in personal conflict, often encounters calamities for which there is no remedy. The sheriff, with the humanity which is seldom wanting in an English gentleman, visited the prisoner on the eve of the execution, and assured him that no indulgence, consistent with the law, should be refused him. Nuncomar expressed his gratitude with great politeness and unaltered composure. Not a muscle of his face moved. Not a sigh broke from him. He put his finger to his forehead, and calmly said that fate would have its way, and that there was no resisting the pleasure of God. He sent his compliments to Francis, Clavering, and Monson, and charged them to protect Rajah Goordas, who was about to become the head of the Brahmins of Bengal. The sheriff withdrew, greatly agitated by what had passed, and Nuncomar sat composedly down to write notes and examine accounts.

The next morning, before the sun was in his power, an immense concourse assembled round the place where the gallows had been set up. Grief and horror were on every face; yet, to the last, the multitude could hardly believe that the English really purposed to take the life of the great Brahmin. At length the mournful procession came through the crowd. Nuncomar sat up in his palanquin, and looked round him with unaltered serenity. He had just parted from those who were most nearly connected with him. Their cries and contortions had appalled the European ministers of justice, but had not produced the smallest effect on the iron stoicism of the prisoner. The only anxiety

which he expressed was, that men of his own priestly caste might be in attendance to take charge of his corpse. He again desired to be remembered to his friends in the Council, mounted the scaffold with firmness, and gave the signal to the executioner. The moment that the drop fell, a howl of sorrow and despair rose from the innumerable spectators. Hundreds turned away their faces from the polluting sight, fled with loud wailings towards the Hoogley, and plunged into its holy waters, as if to purify themselves from the guilt of having looked on such a crime. These feelings were not confined to Calcutta. The whole province was greatly excited; and the population of Dacca, in particular, gave strong signs of grief and dismay.

Of Impey's conduct, it is impossible to speak too severely. We have already said that, in our opinion, he acted unjustly in refusing to respite Nuncomar. No rational man can doubt that he took this course in order to gratify the Governor-General. If we had ever any doubts on that point, they would have been dispelled by a letter which Mr. Gleig has published. Hastings, three or four years later, described Impey as the man "to whose support he was at one time indebted for the safety of his fortune, honour, and reputation." These strong words can refer only to the case of Nuncomar; and they must mean that Impey hanged Nuncomar in order to support Hastings. It is, therefore, our deliberate opinion, that Impey, sitting as a judge, put a man unjustly to death in order to serve a political purpose.

But we look on the conduct of Hastings in a somewhat different light. He was struggling for fortune, honour, liberty—all that makes life valuable. He was beset by rancorous and unprincipled enemies. From his colleagues he could expect no justice. He cannot be blamed for wishing to crush his accusers. He was indeed bound to

use only legitimate means for that end. But it was not strange that he should have thought any means legitimate which were pronounced legitimate by the sages of the law —by men whose peculiar duty it was to deal justly between adversaries, and whose education might be supposed to have peculiarly qualified them for the discharge of that duty. Nobody demands from a party the unbending equity of a judge. The reason that judges are appointed is, that even good men cannot be trusted to decide causes in which they are themselves concerned. Not a day passes on which an honest prosecutor does not ask for what none but a dishonest tribunal would grant. It is too much to expect that any man, when his dearest interests are at stake, and his strongest passions excited, will, as against himself, be more just than the sworn dispensers of justice. To take an analogous case from the history of our own island: Suppose that Lord Stafford, when in the Tower on suspicion of being concerned in the Popish plot, had been apprised that Titus Oates had done something which might, by a questionable construction, be brought under the head of felony. Should we severely blame Lord Stafford, in the supposed case, for causing a prosecution to be instituted, for furnishing funds, for using all his influence to intercept the mercy of the Crown? We think not. If a judge, indeed, from favour to the Catholic lords, were to strain the law in order to hang Oates, such a judge would richly deserve impeachment. But it does not appear to us that the Catholic lord, by bringing the case before the judge for decision, would materially overstep the limits of a just self-defence.

While, therefore, we have not the least doubt that this memorable execution is to be attributed to Hastings, we doubt whether it can with justice be reckoned among his crimes. That his conduct was dictated by a profound policy, is evident. He was in a minority in Council. It

was possible that he might long be in a minority. He knew the native character well. He knew in what abundance accusations are certain to flow in against the most innocent inhabitants of India who is under the frown of power. There was not in the whole black population of Bengal, a place-holder, a place-hunter, a government tenant, who did not think that he might better himself by sending up a deposition against the Governor-General. Under these circumstances, the persecuted statesman resolved to teach the whole crew of accusers and witnesses, that, though in a minority at the council board, he was still to be feared. The lesson which he gave them was indeed one not to be forgotten. The head of the combination which had been formed against him, the richest, the most powerful, the most artful, of the Hindoos, distinguished by the favour of those who then held the government, fenced round by the superstitious reverence of millions, was hanged in broad day before many thousand people. Everything that could make the warning impressive—dignity in the sufferer, solemnity in the proceeding—was found in this case. The helpless rage and vain struggles of the Council made the triumph more signal. From that moment the conviction of every native was, that it was safer to take the part of Hastings in a minority, than that of Francis in a majority; and that he who was so venturous as to join in running down the Governor-General, might chance, in the phrase of the Eastern poet, to find a tiger, while beating the jungle for a deer. The voices of a thousand informers were silenced in an instant. From that time, whatever difficulties Hastings might have to encounter, he was never molested by accusations from natives of India.

It is a remarkable circumstance, that one of the letters of Hastings to Dr. Johnson, bears date a very few hours after the death of Nuncomar. While the whole settlement was

in commotion,—while a mighty and ancient priesthood were weeping over the remains of their chief—the conqueror in that deadly grapple sat down, with characteristic self-possession, to write about the Tour to the Hebrides, Jones's Persian Grammar, and the history, traditions, arts, and natural productions of India!

In the mean time, intelligence of the Rohilla war, and of the first disputes between Hastings and his colleagues, had reached London. The directors took part with the majority, and sent out a letter filled with severe reflections on the conduct of Hastings. They condemned, in strong but just terms, the iniquity of undertaking offensive wars merely for the sake of pecuniary advantages. But they utterly forgot that, if Hastings had by illicit means obtained pecuniary advantages, he had done so, not for his own benefit, but in order to meet their demands. To enjoin honesty, and to insist in having what could not be honestly got, was then the constant practice of the Company. As Lady Macbeth says of her husband, they "would not play false, and yet would wrongly win."

The Regulating Act, by which Hastings had been appointed Governor-General for five years empowered the Crown to remove him on an address from the Company. Lord North was desirous to procure such an address. The three members of Council who had been sent out from England, were men of his own choice. General Clavering, in particular, was supported by a large parliamentary connection, such as no cabinet could be inclined to disoblige. The wish of the minister was to displace Hastings, and to put Clavering at the head of the government. In the Court of Directors parties were very nearly balanced; eleven voted against Hastings—ten for him. The Court of Proprietors was then convened. The great sale-room presented a singular appearance. Letters had been sent by the Secre-

tary of the Treasury, exhorting all the supporters of government who held India stock to be in attendance. Lord Sandwich marshalled the friends of the administration with his usual dexterity and alertness. Fifty peers and privy-councillors, seldom seen so far eastward, were counted in the crowd. The debate lasted till midnight. The opponents of Hastings had a small superiority on the division; but a ballot was demanded, and the result was, that the Governor-General triumphed by a majority of above a hundred over the combined efforts of the directors and the cabinet. The ministers were greatly exasperated by this defeat. Even Lord North lost his temper—no ordinary occurrence with him—and threatened to convoke parliament before Christmas, and to bring in a bill for depriving the Company of all political power, and for restricting it to its old business of trading in silks and teas.

Colonel Macleane, who through all this conflict, had zealously supported the cause of Hastings, now thought that his employer was in imminent danger of being turned out, branded with parliamentary censure, perhaps prosecuted. The opinion of the crown lawyers had already been taken, respecting some parts of the Governor-General's conduct. It seemed to be high time to think of a secure and honourable retreat. Under these circumstances, Macleane thought himself justified in producing the resignation with which he had been intrusted. The instrument was not in very accurate form; but the directors were too eager to be scrupulous. They accepted the resignation, fixed on Mr. Wheler, one of their own body, to succeed Hastings, and sent out orders that General Clavering, as senior member of Council, should exercise the functions of of Governor-General till Mr. Wheler should arrive.

But while these things were passing in England, a great change had taken place in Bengal. Monson was no more.

Only four members of the government were left. Clavering and Francis were on the one side, Barwell and the Governor-General on the other; and the Governor-General had the casting vote. Hastings, who had been during two years destitute of all power and patronage, became at once absolute. He instantly proceeded to retaliate on his adversaries. Their measures were reversed; their creatures were displaced. A new valuation of the lands of Bengal, for the purposes of taxation, was ordered; and it was provided that the whole inquiry should be conducted by the Governor-General, and that all the letters relating to it should run in his name. He began, at the same time, to revolve vast plans of conquest and dominion; plans which he lived to see realised, though not by himself. His project was to form subordinary alliances with the native princes, particularly with those of Oude and Berar; and thus to make Britain the paramount power in India. While he was meditating these great designs, arrived the intelligence that he had ceased to be Governor-General, that his resignation had been accepted, that Mr. Wheler was coming out immediately, and that, till Mr. Wheler arrived, the chair was to be filled by Clavering.

Had Monson been still alive, Hastings would probably have retired without a struggle; but he was now the real master of British India, and he was not disposed to quit his high place. He asserted that he had never given any instructions which could warrant the steps which had been taken. What his instructions had been, he owned he had forgotten. If he had kept a copy of them he had mislaid it. But he was certain that he had repeatedly declared to the Directors that he would not resign. He could not see how the court, possessed of that declaration from himself, could receive his resignation from the doubtful hands of an agent. If the resignation were invalid, all the proceedings which

were founded on that resignation were null, and Hastings was still Governor-General.

He afterwards affirmed that, though his agents had not acted in conformity with his instructions, he would nevertheless have held himself bound by their acts, if Clavering had not attempted to seize the supreme power by violence. Whether this assertion were or were not true, it cannot be doubted that the imprudence of Clavering gave Hastings an advantage. The General sent for the keys of the fort and the treasury, took possession of the records, and held a council at which Francis attended. Hastings took the chair in another apartment, and Barwell sat with him. Each of the two parties had a plausible show of right. There was no authority entitled to their obedience within fifteen thousand miles. It seemed that their remained no way of settling the dispute except an appeal to arms; and from such an appeal Hastings, confident of his influence over his countrymen in India, was not inclined to shrink. He directed the officers of the garrison of Fort William, and of all the neighbouring stations, to obey no orders but his. At the same time, with admirable judgment, he offered to submit the case to the Supreme Court, and to abide by its decision. By making this proposition he risked nothing; yet it was a proposition which his opponents could hardly reject. Nobody could be treated as a criminal, for obeying what the judges had solemnly pronounced to be the lawful government. The boldest man would shrink from taking arms in defence of what the judges should pronounce to be usurpation. Clavering and Francis, after some delay, unwillingly consented to abide by the award of the court. The court pronounced that the resignation was invalid, and that therefore Hastings was still Governor-General under the Regulating Act; and the defeated members of the

Council, finding that the sense of the whole settlement was against them, acquiesced in the decision.

About this time arrived the news that, after a suit which had lasted several years, the Franconian courts had decreed a divorce between Imhoff and his wife. The Baron left Calcutta, carrying with him the means of buying an estate in Saxony. The lady became Mrs. Hastings. The event was celebrated by great festivities; and all the most conspicuous persons at Calcutta, without distinction of parties, were invited to the Government-house. Clavering, as the Mahommedan chronicler tells the story, was sick in mind and body, and excused himself from joining the splendid assembly. But Hastings, whom, as it should seem, success in ambition and in love had put into high good-humour, would take no denial. He went himself to the General's house, and at length brought his vanquished rival in triumph to the gay circle which surrounded the bride. The exertion was too much for a frame broken by mortification as well as by disease—Clavering died a few days later.

Wheler, who came out expecting to be Governor-General, and was forced to content himself with a seat at the Council Board, generally voted with Francis. But the Governor-General, with Barwell's help and his own casting vote, was still the master. Some change took place at this time in the feeling both of the Court of Directors and of the Ministers of the Crown. All designs against Hastings were dropped; and when his original term of five years expired, he was quietly re-appointed. The truth is, that the fearful dangers to which the public interests in every quarter were now exposed, made both Lord North and the Company unwilling to part with a Governor, whose talents, experience, and resolution, enmity itself was compelled to acknowledge.

The crisis was indeed formidable. That great and vic-

torious empire, on the throne of which George the Third had taken his seat eighteen years before, with brighter hopes than had attended the accession of any of the long line of English sovereigns, had, by the most senseless misgovernment, been brought to the verge of ruin. In America millions of Englishmen were at war with the country from which their blood, their language, their religion, and their institutions were derived; and to which, but a short time before, they had been as strongly attached as the inhabitants of Norfolk and Leicestershire. The great powers of Europe, humbled to the dust by the vigour and genius which had guided the councils of George the Second, now rejoiced in the prospect of a signal revenge. The time was approaching when our island, while struggling to keep down the United States of America, and pressed with a still nearer danger by the too just discontents of Ireland, was to be assailed by France, Spain, and Holland, and to be threatened by the armed neutrality of the Baltic; when even our maritime supremacy was to be in jeopardy; when hostile fleets were to command the Straits of Calpe and the Mexican Sea; when the British flag was to be scarcely able to protect the British Channel. Great as were the faults of Hastings, it was happy for our country that at that conjuncture, the most terrible through which she has ever passed, he was the ruler of her Indian dominions.

An attack by sea on Bengal was little to be apprehended. The danger was, that the European enemies of England might form an alliance with some native power—might furnish that power with troops, arms, and ammunition—and might thus assail our possessions on the side of the land. It was chiefly from the Mahrattas that Hastings anticipated danger. The original seat of that singular people was the wild range of hills which run along the western coast of India. In the reign of Aurungzebe the inhabitants

of those regions, led by the great Sevajee, began to descend on the possessions of their wealthier and less warlike neighbours. The energy, ferocity, and cunning of the Mahrattas, soon made them the most conspicuous among the new powers which were generated by the corruption of the decaying monarchy. At first they were only robbers. They soon rose to the dignity of conquerors. Half the provinces of the empire were turned into Mahratta principalities. Freebooters sprung from low castes, and accustomed to menial employments, became mighty Rajahs. The Bonslas, at the head of a band of plunderers, occupied the vast region of Berar. The Guicowar, which is, being interpreted, the Herdsman, founded that dynasty which still reigns in Guzerat. The houses of Scindia and Holkar waxed great in Malwa. One adventurous captain made his nest on the impregnable rock of Gooti. Another became the lord of the thousand villages which are scattered among the green rice-fields of Tanjore.

That was the time, throughout India, of double government. The form and the power were everywhere separated. The Mussulman nabobs, who had become sovereign princes—the Vizier in Oude, and the Nizam at Hydrabad —still called themselves the viceroys of the house of Tamerlane. In the same manner the Mahratta states, though really independent, pretended to be members of one empire; and acknowledged, by words and ceremonies, the supremacy of the heir of Sevajee—a *roi fainéant* who chewed bang, and toyed with dancing girls, in a state-prison at Sattara—and of his Peshwa or mayor of the palace, a great hereditary magistrate, who kept a court with kingly state at Poonah, and whose authority was obeyed in the spacious provinces of Aurungabad and Bejapoor.

Some months before war was declared in Europe, the government of Bengal was alarmed by the news that a

French adventurer, who passed for a man of quality, had arrived at Poonah. It was said that he had been received there with great distinction—that he had delivered to the Peshwa letters and presents from Louis the Sixteenth,—and that a treaty, hostile to England, had been concluded between France and the Mahrattas.

Hastings immediately resolved to strike the first blow. The title of the Peshwa was not undisputed. A portion of the Mahratta nation was favourable to a pretender. The Governor-General determined to espouse this pretender's interest, to move an army across the peninsula of India, and to form a close alliance with the chief of the house of Bonsla, who ruled Berar, and who, in power and dignity, was inferior to none of the Mahratta princes.

The army had marched, and the negotiations with Berar were in progress, when a letter from the English consul at Cairo, brought the news that war had been proclaimed both in London and Paris. All the measures which the crisis required, were adopted by Hastings without a moment of delay. The French factories in Bengal were seized. Orders were sent to Madras that Pondicherry should instantly be occupied. Near Calcutta, works were thrown up, which were thought to render the approach of a hostile force impossible. A maritime establishment was formed for the defence of the river. Nine new battalions of sepoys were raised, and a corps of native artillery was formed out of the hardy Lascars of the Bay of Bengal. Having made these arrangements, the Governor-General with calm confidence pronounced his presidency secure from all attack, unless the Mahrattas should march against it in conjunction with the French.

The expedition which Hastings had sent westward, was not so speedily or completely successful as most of his undertakings. The commanding-officer procrastinated. The

authorities at Bombay blundered. But the Governor-General persevered. A new commander repaired the errors of his predecessor. Several brilliant actions spread the military renown of the English through regions where no European flag had ever been seen. It is probable that, if a new and more formidable danger had not compelled Hastings to change his whole policy, his plans respecting the Mahratta empire would have been carried into complete effect.

The authorities in England had wisely sent out to Bengal, as commander of the forces, and member of the council, one of the most distinguished soldiers of that time. Sir Eyre Coote had, many years before, been conspicuous among the founders of the British Empire in the East. At the council of war which preceded the battle of Plassey, he earnestly recommended, in opposition to the majority, that daring course which, after some hesitation, was adopted, and which was crowned with such splendid success. He subsequently commanded in the south of India against the brave and unfortunate Lally, gained the decisive battle of Wandewash over the French and their native allies, took Pondicherry, and made the English power supreme in the Carnatic. Since those great exploits near twenty years had elapsed. Coote had no longer the bodily activity which he had shown in earlier days; nor was the vigour of his mind altogether unimpaired. He was capricious and fretful, and required much coaxing to keep him in good-humour. It must, we fear, be added, that the love of money had grown upon him, and that he thought more about his allowances, and less about his duties, than might have been expected from so eminent a member of so noble a profession. Still he was perhaps the ablest officer that was then to be found in the British army. Among the native soldiers his name was great, and his influence unrivalled. Nor is he yet forgotten by them. Now and then a white-bearded

old sepoy may still be found, who loves to talk of Porto Novo and Pollilore. It is but a short time since one of those aged men came to present a memorial to an English officer, who holds one of the highest employments in India; a print of Coote hung in the room; the veteran recognised at once that face and figure which he had not seen for more than half a century, and, forgetting his salam to the living, halted, drew himself up, lifted his hand, and with solemn reverence paid his military obeisance to the dead.

Coote did not, like Barwell, vote constantly with the Governor-General; but he was by no means inclined to join in systematic opposition; and on most questions concurred with Hastings, who did his best, by assiduous courtship, and by readily granting the most exorbitant allowances, to gratify the strongest passions of the old soldier.

It seemed likely at this time that a general reconciliation would put an end to the quarrels which had, during some years, weakened and disgraced the government of Bengal. The dangers of the empire might well induce men of patriotic feeling—and of patriotic feeling, neither Hastings nor Francis was destitute—to forget private enmities, and to co-operate heartily for the general good. Coote had never been concerned in faction. Wheler was thoroughly tired of it. Barwell had made an ample fortune, and though he had promised that he would not leave Calcutta while Hastings wanted his help, was most desirous to return to England, and exerted himself to promote an arrangement which would set him at liberty. A compact was made, by which Francis agreed to desist from opposition, and Hastings engaged that the friends of Francis should be admitted to a fair share of the honours and emoluments of the service. During a few months after this treaty there was apparent harmony at the council-board.

Harmony, indeed, was never more necessary; for at this

moment internal calamities, more formidable than war itself, menaced Bengal. The authors of the Regulating Act of 1773, had established two independent powers, the one judicial, the other political; and, with a carelessness scandalously common in English legislation, had omitted to define the limits of either. The judges took advantage of the indistinctness, and attempted to draw to themselves supreme authority, not only within Calcutta, but through the whole of the great territory subject to the presidency of Fort William. There are few Englishmen who will not admit that the English law, in spite of modern improvements, is neither so cheap nor so speedy as might be wished. Still, it is a system which has grown up amongst us. In some points, it has been fashioned to suit our feelings; in others, it has gradually fashioned our feelings to suit itself. Even to its worst evils we are accustomed; and therefore, though we may complain of them, they do not strike us with the horror and dismay which would be produced by a new grievance of smaller severity. In India the case is widely different. English law, transplanted to that country, has all the vices from which we suffer here; it has them all in a far higher degree; and it has other vices, compared with which the worst vices from which we suffer are trifles. Dilatory here, it is far more dilatory in a land where the help of an interpreter is needed by every judge, and by every advocate. Costly here, it is far more costly in a land into which the legal practitioners must be imported from an immense distance. All English labour in India, from the labour of the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief, down to that of a groom or a watchmaker, must be paid for at a higher rate than at home. No man will be banished, and banished to the torrid zone, for nothing. The rule holds good with respect to the legal profession. No English barrister will work, fifteen thousand miles from all his friends,

with the thermometer at ninety-six in the shade, for the same emoluments which will content him in the Chambers that overlook the Thames. Accordingly, the fees in Calcutta are about three times as great as the fees of Westminster Hall; and this, though the people of India are, beyond all comparison, poorer than the people of England. Yet the delay and the expense, grevious as they are, form the smallest part of the evil which English law, imported without modifications into India, could not fail to produce. The strongest feelings of our nature, honour, religion, female modesty, rose up against the innovation. Arrest on mesne process was the first step in most civil proceedings; and to a native of rank, arrest was not merely a restraint, but a foul personal indignity. Oaths were required in every stage of every suit; and the feeling of a quaker about an oath is hardly stronger than that of a respectable native. That the apartments of a woman of quality should be entered by strange men, or that her face should be seen by them, are, in the East, intolerable outrages—outrages which are more dreaded than death, and which can be expiated only by the shedding of blood. To these outrages the most distinguished families of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, were now exposed. Imagine what the state of our own country would be, if a jurisprudence were, on a sudden, introduced amongst us, which should be to us what our jurisprudence was to our Asiatic subjects. Imagine what the state of our country would be, if it were enacted that any man, by merely swearing that a debt was due to him, should acquire a right to insult the persons of men of the most honourable and sacred callings, and of women of the most shrinking delicacy, to horsewhip a general officer, to put a bishop in the stocks, to treat ladies in the way which called forth the blow of Wat Tyler. Something like this was the effect of

the attempt which the Supreme Court made to extend its jurisdiction over the whole of the Company's territory.

A reign of terror began—of terror heightened by mystery; for even that which was endured was less horrible than that which was anticipated. No man knew what was next to be expected from this strange tribunal. It came from beyond the black water, as the people of India, with mysterious horror, call the sea. It consisted of judges, not one of whom spoke the language, or was familiar with the usages, of the millions over whom they claimed boundless authority. Its records were kept in unknown characters; its sentences were pronounced in unknown sounds. It had already collected round itself an army of the worst part of the native population—informers, and false witnesses, and common barrators, and agents of chicane; and, above all, a banditti of bailiffs' followers, compared with whom the retainers of the worst English spunging-houses, in the worst times, might be considered as upright and tender-hearted. Numbers of natives, highly considered among their countrymen, were seized, hurried up to Calcutta, flung into the common jail—not for any crime ever imputed—not for any debt that had been proved, but merely as a precaution till their cause should come to trial. There were instances in which men of the most venerable dignity, persecuted without a cause by extortioners, died of rage and shame in the gripe of the vile alguazils of Impey. The harems of noble Mahommedans—sanctuaries respected in the East by governments which respected nothing else—were burst open by gangs of bailiffs. The Mussulmans, braver and less accustomed to submission than the Hindoos, sometimes stood on their defence; and there were instances in which they shed their blood in the doorway, while defending, sword in hand, the sacred apartments of

their women. Nay, it seemed, as if even the faint-hearted Bengalee, who had crouched at the feet of Surajah Dowlah, who had been mute during the administration of Vansittart, would at length find courage in despair. No Mahratta invasion had ever spread through the province such dismay as this inroad of English lawyers. All the injustice of former oppressors, Asiatic and European, appeared as a blessing when compared with the justice of the Supreme Court.

Every class of the population, English and native, with the exception of the ravenous pettifoggers who fattened on the misery and terror of an immense community, cried out loudly against this fearful oppression. But the judges were immovable. If a bailiff was resisted, they ordered the soldiers to be called out. If a servant of the Company, in conformity with the orders of the government, withstood the miserable catch-poles who, with Impey's writs in their hands, exceeded the insolence and rapacity of gang-robbers, he was flung into prison for a contempt. The lapse of sixty years—the virtue and wisdom of many eminent magistrates, who have during that time administered justice in the Supreme Court—have not effaced from the minds of the people of Bengal the recollection of those evil days.

The members of the government were, on this subject, united as one man. Hastings had courted the judges; he had found them useful instruments. But he was not disposed to make them his own masters, or the masters of India. His mind was large; his knowledge of the native character most accurate. He saw that the system pursued by the Supreme Court was degrading to the government, and ruinous to the people; and resolved to oppose it manfully. The consequence was, that the friendship—if that be the proper word for such a connection—which had existed between him and Impey, was for a time completely

dissolved. The government placed itself firmly between the tyrannical tribunal and the people. The Chief Justice proceeded to the wildest excesses. The Governor-General and all the members of Council were served with summonses, calling on them to appear before the King's justices, and to answer for their public acts. This was too much. Hastings, with just scorn, refused to obey the call, set at liberty the persons wrongfully detained by the Court, and took measures for resisting the outrageous proceedings of the sheriffs' officers, if necessary, by the sword. But he had in view another device, which might prevent the necessity of an appeal to arms. He was seldom at a loss for an expedient; and he knew Impey well. The expedient, in this case, was a very simple one—neither more nor less than a bribe. Impey was, by act of Parliament, a judge, independent of the government of Bengal, and entitled to a salary of £8,000 a year. Hastings proposed to make him also a judge in the Company's service, removable at the pleasure of the government of Bengal! and to give him, in that capacity, about £8,000 a year more. It was understood that, in consideration of this new salary, Impey would desist from urging the high pretensions of his court. If he did urge these pretensions, the government could, at a moment's notice, eject him from the new place which had been created for him. The bargain was struck, Bengal was saved, an appeal to force was averted; and the Chief Justice was rich, quiet, and infamous.

Of Impey's conduct it is unnecessary to speak. It was of a piece with almost every part of his conduct that comes under the notice of history. No other such judge has dishonoured the English ermine, since Jefferies drank himself to death in the Tower. But we cannot agree with those who have blamed Hastings for this transaction. The case stood thus. The negligent manner in which the Regulating

Act had been framed, put it in the power of the Chief Justice to throw a great country into the most dreadful confusion. He was determined to use his power to the utmost, unless he was paid to be still; and Hastings consented to pay him. The necessity was to be deplored. It is also to be deplored that pirates should be able to exact ransom, by threatening to make their captives walk the plank. But to ransom a captive from pirates, has always been held a humane and Christian act; and it would be absurd to charge the payer of the ransom with corrupting the virtue of the corsair. This, we seriously think, is a not unfair illustration of the relative position of Impey, Hastings, and the people of India. Whether it was right in Impey to demand or to accept a price for powers which, if they really belonged to him, he could not abdicate—which, if they did not belong to him, he ought never to have usurped—and which in neither case he could honestly sell—is one question. It is quite another question, whether Hastings was not right to give any sum, however large, to any man, however worthless, rather than either surrender millions of human beings to pillage, or rescue them by civil war.

Francis strongly opposed this arrangement. It may, indeed, be suspected that personal aversion to Impey was as strong a motive with Francis as regard for the welfare of the province. To a mind burning with resentment, it might seem better to leave Bengal to the oppressors, than to redeem it by enriching them. It is not improbable, on the other hand, that Hastings may have been the more willing to resort to an expedient agreeable to the Chief Justice, because that high functionary had already been so serviceable, and might, when existing dissensions were composed, be serviceable again.

But it was not on this point alone that Francis was now

opposed to Hastings. The peace between them proved to be only a short and hollow truce, during which their mutual aversion was constantly becoming stronger. At length an explosion took place. Hastings publicly charged Francis with having deceived him, and induced Barwell to quit the service by insincere promises. Then came a dispute, such as frequently arises even between honourable men, when they make important agreements by mere verbal communication. An impartial historian will probably be of opinion that they had misunderstood each other; but their minds were so much embittered, that they imputed to each other nothing less than deliberate villany. "I do not," said Hastings, in a minute recorded in the Consultations of the Government—"I do not trust to Mr. Francis's promises of candour, convinced that he is incapable of it. I judge of his public conduct by his private, which I have found to be void of truth and honour." After the Council had risen, Francis put a challenge into the Governor-General's hand: it was instantly accepted. They met, and fired. Francis was shot through the body. He was carried to a neighbouring house, where it appeared that the wound, though severe, was not mortal. Hastings inquired repeatedly after his enemy's health, and proposed to call on him; but Francis coldly declined the visit. He had a proper sense, he said, of the Governor-General's politeness, but must decline any private interview. They could meet only at the council-board.

In a very short time it was made signally manifest to how great a danger the Governor-General had, on this occasion, exposed his country. A crisis arrived with which he, and he alone, was competent to deal. It is not too much to say, that, if he had been taken from the head of affairs, the years 1780 and 1781 would have been as fatal to our power in Asia as to our power in America.

The Mahrattas had been the chief objects of apprehension to Hastings. The measures which he had adopted for the purpose of breaking their power, had at first been frustrated by the errors of those whom he was compelled to employ; but his perseverance and ability seemed likely to be crowned with success, when a far more formidable danger showed itself in a distant quarter.

About thirty years before this time, a Mahommedan soldier had begun to distinguish himself in the wars of Southern India. His education had been neglected; his extraction was mean. His father had been a petty officer of revenue; his grandfather a wandering Dervise. But though thus meanly descended—though ignorant even of the alphabet—the adventurer had no sooner been placed at the head of a body of troops, than he approved himself a man born for conquest and command. Among the crowd of chiefs who were struggling for a share of India, none could compare with him in the qualities of the captain and the statesman. He became a general—he became a prince. Out of the fragments of old principalities, which had gone to pieces in the general wreck, he formed for himself a great, compact, and vigorous empire. That empire he ruled with the ability, severity, and vigilance of Louis the Eleventh. Licentious in his pleasures, implacable in his revenge, he had yet enlargement of mind enough to perceive how much the prosperity of subjects adds to the strength of governments. He was an oppressor; but he had at least the merit of protecting his people against all oppression except his own. He was now in extreme old age; but his intellect was as clear, and his spirit as high, as in the prime of manhood. Such was the great Hyder Ali, the founder of the Mahommedan kingdom of Mysore, and the most formidable enemy with whom the English conquerors of India have ever had to contend.

Had Hastings been governor of Madras, Hyder would have been either made a friend, or vigorously encountered as an enemy. Unhappily the English authorities in the south provoked their powerful neighbour's hostility, without being prepared to repel it. On a sudden, an army of ninety thousand men, far superior in discipline and efficiency to any other native force that could be found in India, came pouring through those wild passes, which, worn by mountain torrents, and dark with jungle, lead down from the table-land of Mysore to the plains of the Carnatic. This great army was accompanied by a hundred pieces of cannon; and its movements were guided by many French officers, trained in the best military schools of Europe.

Hyder was everywhere triumphant. The sepoys in many British garrisons flung down their arms. Some forts were surrendered by treachery, and some by despair. In a few days the whole open country north of the Coleroon had submitted. The English inhabitants of Madras could already see by night from the top of Mount St. Thomas, the eastern sky reddened by a vast semi-circle of blazing villages. The white villas, embosomed in little groves of tulip-trees, to which our countrymen retire after the daily labours of government and of trade, when the cool evening breeze springs up from the bay, were now left without inhabitants; for bands of the fierce horsemen of Mysore had already been seen prowling near those gay verandas. Even the town was not thought secure, and the British merchants and public functionaries made haste to crowd themselves behind the cannon of Fort St. George.

There were the means indeed of forming an army which might have defended the presidency, and even driven the invader back to his mountains. Sir Hector Munro was at the head of one considerable force; Baillie was advancing with another. United, they might have presented a for-

midable front even to such an enemy as Hyder. But the English commanders, neglecting those fundamental rules of the military art, of which the propriety is obvious even to men who have never received a military education, deferred their junction, and were separately attacked. Baillie's detachment was destroyed. Munro was forced to abandon his baggage, to fling his guns into the tanks, and to save himself by a retreat which might be called a flight. In three weeks from the commencement of the war, the British empire in southern India had been brought to the verge of ruin. Only a few fortified places remained to us. The glory of our arms had departed. It was known that a great French expedition might soon be expected on the coast of Coromandel. England, beset by enemies on every side, was in no condition to protect such remote dependencies.

Then it was that the fertile genius and serene courage of Hastings achieved their most signal triumph. A swift ship, flying before the south-west monsoon, brought the evil tidings in few days to Calcutta. In twenty-four hours the Governor-General had framed a complete plan of policy adapted to the altered state of affairs. The struggle with Hyder was a struggle for life and death. All minor objects must be sacrificed to the preservation of the Carnatic. The disputes with the Mahrattas must be accomodated. A large military force and a supply of money must be instantly sent to Madras. But even these measures would be insufficient, unless the war, hitherto so grossly mismanaged, were placed under the direction of a vigorous mind. It was no time for trifling. Hastings determined to resort to an extreme exercise of power; to suspend the incapable governor of Fort St. George, to send Sir Eyre Coote to oppose Hyder, and to entrust that distinguished general with the whole administration of the war.

In spite of the sullen opposition of Francis, who had

now recovered from his wound, and had returned to the Council, the Governor-General's wise and firm policy was approved by the majority of the board. The reinforcements were sent off with great expedition, and reached Madras before the French armament arrived in the Indian seas. Coote, broken by age and disease, was no longer the Coote of Wandewash; but he was still a resolute and skilful commander. The progress of Hyder was arrested; and in a few months the great victory of Porto Novo retrieved the honour of the English arms.

In the mean time Francis had returned to England, and Hastings was now left perfectly unfettered. Wheler had gradually been relaxing in his opposition; and, after the departure of his vehement and implacable colleague, co-operated heartily with the Governor-General; whose influence over his countrymen in India, always great, had, by the vigour and success of his recent measures, been considerably increased.

But though the difficulties arising from factions within the Council were at an end, another class of difficulties had become more pressing than ever. The financial embarrassment was extreme. Hastings had to find the means, not only of carrying on the government of Bengal, but of maintaining a most costly war against both Indian and European enemies in the Carnatic, and of making remittances to England. A few years before this time he had obtained relief by plundering the Mogul, and enslaving the Rohillas; nor were the resources of his fruitful mind by any means exhausted.

His first design was on Benares, a city which in wealth, population, dignity, and sanctity, was among the foremost of Asia. It was commonly believed that half a million of human beings was crowded into that labyrinth of lofty alleys, rich with shrines, and minarets, and balconies, and

carved oriels, to which the sacred apes clung by hundreds. The traveller could scarcely make his way through the press of holy mendicants, and not less holy bulls. The broad and stately flights of steps which descended from these swarming haunts to the bathing-places along the Ganges, were worn every day by the footsteps of an innumerable multitude of worshippers. The schools and temples drew crowds of pious Hindoos from every province where the Brahminical faith was known. Hundreds of devotees came thither every month to die—for it was believed that a peculiarly happy fate awaited the man who should pass from the sacred city into the sacred river. Nor was superstition the only motive which allured strangers to that great metropolis. Commerce had as many pilgrims as religion. All along the shores of the venerable stream, lay great fleets of vessels laden with rich merchandize. From the looms of Benares went forth the most delicate silks that adorned the balls of St. James's and of the *Petit Trianon;* and in the bazars, the muslins of Bengal, and the sabres of Oude, were mingled with the jewels of Golconda, and the shawls of Cashmere. This rich capital, and the surrounding tract, had long been under the immediate rule of a Hindoo prince, who rendered homage to the Mogul emperors. During the great anarchy of India, the lords of Benares became independent of the court of Delhi; but were compelled to submit to the authority of the nabob of Oude. Oppressed by this formidable neighbour, they invoked the protection of the English. The English protection was given; and at length the Nabob Vizier, by a solemn treaty, ceded all his rights over Benares to the Company. From that time the Rajah was the vassal of the government of Bengal, acknowledged its supremacy, and sent an annual tribute to Fort William. These duties

Cheyte Sing, the reigning prince, had fulfilled with strict punctuality.

Respecting the precise nature of the legal relation between the Company and the Rajah of Benares, there has been much warm and acute controversy. On the one side, it has been maintained, that Cheyte Sing was merely a great subject on whom the superior power had a right to call for aid in the necessities of the empire. On the other side, it has been contended that he was an independent prince, that the only claim which the Company had upon him was for a fixed tribute, and that, while the fixed tribute was regularly paid, as it assuredly was, the English had no more right to exact any further contribution from him, than to demand subsidies from Holland or Denmark. Nothing is easier than to find precedents and analogies in favour of either view.

Our own impression is, that neither view is correct. It was too much the habit of English politicians to take it for granted that there was in India a known and definite constitution by which questions of this kind were to be decided. The truth is, that during the interval which elapsed between the fall of the house of Tamerlane, and the establishment of the British ascendency, there was no constitution. The old order of things had passed away; the new order of things was not yet formed. All was transition, confusion, obscurity. Everybody kept his head as he best might, and scrambled for whatever he could get. There have been similar seasons in Europe. The time of the dissolution of the Carlovingian empire is an instance. Who would think of seriously discussing the question, what extent of pecuniary aid and of obedience Hugh Capet had a constitutional right to demand from the Duke of Britany, or the Duke of Normandy? The words "con-

stitutional right" had, in that state of society no meaning. If Hugh Capet laid hands on all the possessions of the Duke of Normandy, this might be unjust and immoral; but it would not be illegal, in the sense in which the ordinances of Charles the Tenth were illegal. If, on the other hand, the Duke of Normandy made war on Hugh Capet, this might be unjust and immoral; but it would not be illegal in the sense in which the expedition of Prince Louis Bonaparte was illegal.

Very similar to this was the state of India sixty years ago. Of the existing governments not a single one could lay claim to legitimacy, or plead any other title than recent occupation. There was scarcely a province in which the real sovereignty and the nominal sovereignty were not disjoined. Titles and forms were still retained, which implied that the heir of Tamerlane was an absolute ruler, and that the nabobs of the provinces were his lieutenants. In reality, he was a captive. The nabobs were in some places independent princes. In other places, as in Bengal and the Carnatic, they had, like their master, become mere phantoms, and the Company was supreme. Among the Mahrattas again, the heir of Sevajee still kept the title of rajah; but he was a prisoner, and his prime minister, the Peshwa, had become the hereditary chief of the state. The Peshwa, in his turn, was fast sinking into the same degraded situation to which he had reduced the rajah. It was, we believe, impossible to find, from the Himalayas to Mysore, a single government which was at once *de facto* and *de jure*—which possessed the physical means of making itself feared by its neighbours and subjects, and which had at the same time the authority derived from law and long prescription.

Hastings clearly discerned, what was hidden from most of his contemporaries, that such a state of things gave immense advantages to a ruler of great talents and few scruples.

In every international question that could arise, he had his option between the *de facto* ground and the *de jure* ground; and the probability was that one of those grounds would sustain any claim that it might be convenient for him to make, and enable him to resist any claim made by others. In every controversy, accordingly, he resorted to the plea which suited his immediate purpose, without troubling himself in the least about consistency; and thus he scarcely ever failed to find what, to persons of short memories and scanty information, seemed to be a justification for what he wanted to do. Sometimes the nabob of Bengal is a shadow, sometimes a monarch; sometimes the vizier is a mere deputy, sometimes an independent potentate. If it is expedient for the Company to show some legal title to the revenues of Bengal, the grant under the seal of the Mogul is brought forward as an instrument of the highest authority. When the Mogul asks for the rents which were reserved to him by that very grant, he is told that he is a mere pageant; that the English power rests on a very different foundation from a charter given by him; that he is welcome to play at royalty as long as he likes, but that he must expect no tribute from the real masters of India.

It is true, that it was in the power of others, as well as of Hastings, to practise this legerdemain; but in the controversies of governments, sophistry is of little use unless it be backed by power. There is a principle which Hastings was fond of asserting in the strongest terms, and on which he acted with undeviating steadiness. It is a principle which, we must own, can hardly be disputed in the present state of public law. It is this—that where an ambiguous question arises between two governments, there is, if they cannot agree, no appeal except to force, and that the opinion of the strongest must prevail. Almost every question was ambiguous in India. The English government was the strongest in India. The consequences are

obvious. The English government might do exactly what it chose.

The English government now chose to wring money out of Cheyte Sing. It had formerly been convenient to treat him as a sovereign prince; it was now convenient to treat him as a subject. Dexterity inferior to that of Hastings could easily find in that general chaos of laws and customs, arguments for either course. Hastings wanted a great supply. It was known that Cheyte Sing had a large revenue, and it was suspected that he had accumulated a treasure. Nor was he a favourite at Calcutta. He had, when the Governor-General was in great difficulties, courted the favour of Francis and Clavering. Hastings, who, less we believe from evil passions than from policy, seldom left an injury unpunished, was not sorry that the fate of Cheyte Sing should teach neighbouring princes the same lesson which the fate of Nuncomar had already impressed on the inhabitants of Bengal.

In 1778, on the first breaking out of the war with France, Cheyte Sing was called upon to pay, in addition to his fixed tribute, an extraordinary contribution of £50,000. In 1779, an equal sum was exacted. In 1780, the demand was renewed. Cheyte Sing, in the hope of obtaining some indulgence, secretly offered the Governor-General a bribe of £20,000. Hastings took the money; and his enemies have maintained that he took it intending to keep it. He certainly concealed the transaction, for a time, both from the Council in Bengal, and from the Directors at home; nor did he ever give any satisfactory reason for the concealment. Public spirit, or the fear of detection, however, determined him to withstand the temptation. He paid over the bribe to the Company's treasury, and insisted that the Rajah should instantly comply with the demands of the English government. The Rajah, after the fashion of his countrymen, shuffled, solicited, and pleaded poverty. The grasp

of Hastings was not to be so eluded. He added another £10,000 as a fine for delay, and sent troops to exact the money.

The money was paid. But this was not enough. The late events in the south of India had increased the financial embarrassments of the Company. Hastings was determined to plunder Cheyte Sing, and, for that end, to fasten a quarrel on him. Accordingly, the Rajah was now required to keep a body of cavalry for the service of the British government. He objected and evaded. This was exactly what the Governor-General wanted. He had now a pretext for treating the wealthiest of his vassals as a criminal. "I resolved," these are the words of Hastings himself, "to draw from his guilt the means of relief to the Company's distresses,—to make him pay largely for his pardon, or to exact a severe vengeance for past delinquency." The plan was simply this—to demand larger and larger contributions, till the Rajah should be driven to remonstrate, then to call his remonstrance a crime, and to punish him by confiscating all his possessions.

Cheyte Sing was in the greatest dismay. He offered £200,000 to propitiate the British government. But Hastings replied, that nothing less than half a million would be accepted. Nay, he began to think of selling Benares to Oude, as he had formerly sold Allahabad and Rohilcund. The matter was one which could not be well managed at a distance; and Hastings resolved to visit Benares.

Cheyte Sing received his liege lord with every mark of reverence; came near sixty miles, with his guards, to meet and escort the illustrious visitor; and expressed his deep concern at the displeasure of the English. He even took off his turban, and laid it in the lap of Hastings—a gesture which in India marks the most profound submission and devotion. Hastings behaved with cold and repulsive severity. Having arrived at Benares, he sent to the Rajah a

paper containing the demands of the government of Bengal. The Rajah, in reply, attempted to clear himself from the accusations brought against him. Hastings, who wanted money and not excuses, was not to be put off by the ordinary artifices of eastern negotiation. He instantly ordered the Rajah to be arrested, and placed under the custody of two companies of sepoys.

In taking these strong measures, Hastings scarcely showed his usual judgment. It is probable that, having had little opportunity of personally observing any part of the population of India, except the Bengalees, he was not fully aware of the difference between their character and that of the tribes which inhabit the upper provinces. He was now in a land far more favourable to the vigour of the human frame, than the Delta of the Ganges; in a land fruitful of soldiers, who have been found worthy to follow English battalions to the charge, and into the breach. The Rajah was popular among his subjects. His administration had been mild; and the prosperity of the district which he governed presented a striking contrast to the depressed state of Bahar, under our rule—a still more striking contrast to the misery of the provinces which were cursed by the tyranny of the Nabob Vizier. The national and religious prejudices with which the English were regarded throughout India, were peculiarly intense in the metropolis of the Brahminical superstition. It can therefore scarcely be doubted that the Governor-General, before he outraged the dignity of Cheyte Sing by an arrest, ought to have assembled a force capable of bearing down all opposition. This had not been done. The handful of sepoys who attended Hastings, would probably have been sufficient to overawe Moorshedabad, or the Black town of Calcutta. But they were unequal to a conflict with the hardy rabble of Benares. The streets surrounding the palace were filled by an immense multitude; of whom a large proportion, as is usual in upper

India, wore arms. The tumult became a fight, and the fight a massacre. The English officers defended themselves with desperate courage against overwhelming numbers, and fell, as became them, sword in hand. The sepoys were butchered. The gates were forced. The captive prince, neglected by his jailors during the confusion, discovered an outlet which opened on the precipitous bank of the Ganges, let himself down to the water by a string made of the turbans of his attendants, found a boat, and escaped to the opposite shore.

If Hastings had, by indiscreet violence, brought himself into a difficult and perilous situation, it is only just to acknowledge, that he extricated himself with even more than his usual ability and presence of mind. He had only fifty men with him. The building in which he had taken up his residence was on every side blockaded by the insurgents. But his fortitude remained unshaken. The Rajah from the other side of the river sent apologies and liberal offers. They were not even answered. Some subtle and enterprising men were found who undertook to pass through the throng of enemies, and to convey the intelligence of the late events to the English cantonments. It is the fashion of the natives of India to wear large ear-rings of gold. When they travel, the rings are laid aside lest they should tempt some gang of robbers; and, in place of the ring, a quill or a roll of paper is inserted in the orifice to prevent it from closing. Hastings placed in the ears of his messengers letters rolled up in the smallest compass. Some of these letters were addressed to the commanders of the English troops. One was written to assure his wife of his safety. One was to the envoy whom he had sent to negotiate with the Mahrattas. Instructions for the negotiation were needed; and the Governor-General framed them in that situation of extreme danger, with as much composure as if he had been writing in his palace at Calcutta.

Things, however, were not yet at the worst. An English officer of more spirit than judgment, eager to distinguish himself, made a premature attack on the insurgents beyond the river. His troops were entangled in narrow streets, and assailed by a furious population. He fell, with many of his men; and the survivors were forced to retire.

This event produced the effect which has never failed to follow every check, however slight, sustained in India by the English arms. For hundreds of miles round, the whole country was in commotion. The entire population of the district of Benares took arms. The fields were abandoned by the husbandmen, who thronged to defend their prince. The infection spread to Oude. The oppressed people of that province rose up against the Nabob Vizier, refused to pay their imposts, and put the revenue officers to flight. Even Bahar was ripe for revolt. The hopes of Cheyte Sing began to rise. Instead of imploring mercy in the humble style of a vassal, he began to talk the language of a conqueror, and threatened, it was said, to sweep the white usurpers out of the land. But the English troops were now assembling fast. The officers, and even the private men, regarded the Governor-General with enthusiastic attachment, and flew to his aid with an alacrity which, as he boasted, had never been shown on any other occasion. Major Popham, a brave and skilful soldier, who had highly distinguished himself in the Mahratta war, and in whom the Governor-General reposed the greatest confidence, took the command. The tumultuary army of the Rajah was put to rout. His fastnesses were stormed. In a few hours, above thirty thousand men left his standard, and returned to their ordinary avocations. The unhappy prince fled from his country for ever. His fair domain was added to the British dominions. One of his relations indeed was appointed rajah; but the Rajah of Benares was henceforth to be, like the Nabob of Bengal, a mere pensioner.

By this revolution, an addition of £200,000 a year was made to the revenues of the Company. But the immediate relief was not as great as had been expected. The treasure laid up by Cheyte Sing had been popularly estimated at a million sterling. It turned out to be about a fourth part of that sum, and, such as it was, it was seized and divided as prize-money by the army.

Disappointed in his expectations from Benares, Hastings was more violent than he would otherwise have been, in his dealings with Oude. Sujah Dowlah had long been dead. His son and successor, Asaph-ul-Dowlah, was one of the weakest and most vicious even of eastern princes. His life was divided between torpid repose, and the most odious forms of sensuality. In his court there was boundless waste; throughout his dominions, wretchedness and disorder. He had been, under the skilful management of the English government, gradually sinking from the rank of an independent prince to that of a vassal of the Company. It was only by the help of a British brigade that he could be secure from the aggressions of neighbours who despised his weakness, and from the vengeance of subjects who detested his tyranny. A brigade was furnished; and he engaged to defray the charge of paying and maintaining it. From that time his independence was at an end. Hastings was not a man to lose the advantage which he had thus gained. The Nabob soon began to complain of the burden which he had undertaken to bear. His revenues, he said, were falling off; his servants were unpaid; he could no longer support the expense of the arrangement which he had sanctioned. Hastings would not listen to these representations. The Vizier, he said, had invited the Government of Bengal to send him troops, and had promised to pay for them. The troops had been sent. How long the troops were to remain in Oude, was a matter not settled by the treaty. It remained, therefore, to be settled between

the contracting parties. But the contracting parties differed. Who then must decide? The strongest.

Hastings also argued that, if the English force was withdrawn, Oude would certainly become a prey to anarchy, and would probably be overrun by a Mahratta army. That the finances of Oude were embarrassed, he admitted. But, he contended, not without reason, that the embarrassment was to be attributed to the incapacity and vices of Asaph-ul-Dowlah himself, and that, if less were spent on the troops, the only effect would be that more would be squandered on worthless favourites.

Hastings had intended, after settling the affairs of Benares, to visit Lucknow, and there to confer with Asaph-ul-Dowlah. But the obsequious courtesy of the Nabob Vizier prevented that visit. With a small train he hastened to meet the Governor-General. An interview took place in the fortress which, from the crest of the precipitous rock of Chunar, looks down on the waters of the Ganges.

At first sight it might appear impossible that the negotiation should come to an amicable close. Hastings wanted an extraordinary supply of money. Asaph-ul-Dowlah wanted to obtain a remission of what he already owed. Such a difference seemed to admit of no compromise. There was, however, one course satisfactory to both sides, one course by which it was possible to relieve the finances both of Oude and of Bengal; and that course was adopted. It was simply this—that the Governor-General and the Nabob Vizier should join to rob a third party; and the third party whom they determined to rob was the parent of one of the robbers.

The mother of the late Nabob, and his wife, who was the mother of the present Nabob, were known as the Begums or Princesses of Oude. They had possessed great influence over Sujah Dowlah, and had, at his death, been left in possession of a splendid dotation. The domains of which

they received the rents and administered the government were of wide extent. The treasure hoarded by the late Nabob—a treasure which was probably estimated at nearly three millions sterling—was in their hands. They continued to occupy his favourite palace at Fyzabad, the Beautiful Dwelling; while Asaph-ul-Dowlah held his court in the stately Lucknow, which he had built for himself on the shores of the Goomti, and had adorned with noble mosques and colleges.

Asaph-ul-Dowlah had already extorted considerable sums from his mother. She had at length appealed to the English; and the English had interfered. A solemn compact had been made, by which she consented to give her son some pecuniary assistance, and he in his turn promised never to commit any further invasion of her rights. This compact was formally guarantied by the government of Bengal. But times had changed; money was wanted; and the power which had given the guarantee was not ashamed to instigate the spoiler.

It was necessary to find some pretext for a confiscation, inconsistent not merely with plighted faith—not merely with the ordinary rules of humanity and justice—but with that great law of filial piety, which, even in the wildest tribes of savages—even in those more degraded communities which wither under the influence of a corrupt half-civilisation—retains a certain authority over the human mind. A pretext was the last thing that Hastings was likely to want. The insurrection at Benares had produced disturbances in Oude. These disturbances it was convenient to impute to the Princesses. Evidence for the imputation there was scarcely any; unless reports wandering from one mouth to another, and gaining something by every transmission, may be called evidence. The accused were furnished with no charge; they were permitted to make no defence; for the Governor-General wisely con-

sidered, that if he tried them, he might not be able to find a ground for plundering them. It was agreed between him and the Nabob Vizier, that the noble ladies should, by a sweeping measure of confiscation, be stripped of their domains and treasures for the benefit of the company; and that the sums thus obtained should be accepted by the government of Bengal in satisfaction of its claims on the government of Oude.

While Asaph-ul-Dowlah was at Chunar, he was completely subjugated by the clear and commanding intellect of the English statesman. But when they had separated, he began to reflect with uneasiness on the engagements into which he had entered. His mother and grandmother protested and implored. His heart, deeply corrupted by absolute power and licentious pleasures, yet not naturally unfeeling, failed him in this crisis. Even the English resident at Lucknow, though hitherto devoted to Hastings, shrank from extreme measures. But the Governor-General was inexorable. He wrote to the resident in terms of the greatest severity, and declared that, if the spoliation which had been agreed upon were not instantly carried into effect, he would himself go to Lucknow, and do that from which feebler minds recoiled with dismay. The resident, thus menaced, waited on his Highness, and insisted that the treaty of Chunar should be carried into full and immediate effect. Asaph-ul-Dowlah yielded—making at the same time a solemn protestation, that he yielded to compulsion. The lands were resumed; but the treasure was not so easily obtained. It was necessary to use force. A body of the Company's troops marched to Fyzabad, and forced the gates of the palace. The princesses were confined to their own apartments. But still they refused to submit. Some more stringent mode of coercion was to be found. A mode was found, of which, even at this distance of time, we cannot speak without shame and sorrow.

There were at Fyzabad two ancient men belonging to that unhappy class which a practice of immemorial antiquity in the East has excluded from the pleasures of love, and from the hope of posterity. It has always been held in Asiatic courts, that beings thus estranged from sympathy with their kind are those whom princes may most safely trust. Sujah Dowlah had been of this opinion. He had given his entire confidence to the two eunuchs; and after his death they remained at the head of the household of his widow.

These men were, by the orders of the British government, seized, imprisoned, ironed, starved almost to death, in order to extort money from the princesses. After they had been two months in confinement, their health gave way. They implored permission to take a little exercise in the garden of their prison. The officer who was in charge of them stated, that if they were allowed this indulgence, there was not the smallest chance of their escaping, and that their irons really added nothing to the security of the custody in which they were kept. He did not understand the plan of his superiors. Their object in these inflictions was not security, but torture; and all mitigation was refused. Yet this was not the worst. It was resolved by an English government that these two infirm old men should be delivered to the tormentors. For that purpose they were removed to Lucknow. What horrors their dungeon there witnessed can only be guessed. But there remains on the records of Parliament this letter, written by a British resident to a British soldier:—

"Sir, the Nabob having determined to inflict corporal punishment upon the prisoners under your guard, this is to desire that his officers, when they shall come, may have free access to the prisoners, and be permitted to do with them as they shall see proper."

While these barbarities were perpetrated at Lucknow,

the princesses were still under duresse at Fyzabad. Food was allowed to enter their apartments only in such scanty quantities, that their female attendants were in danger of perishing with hunger. Month after month this cruelty continued, till at length, after twelve hundred thousand pounds had been wrung out of the princesses, Hastings began to think that he had really got to the bottom of their revenue, and that no rigour could extort more. Then at length the wretched men who were detained at Lucknow regained their liberty. When their irons were knocked off, and the doors of their prison opened, their quivering lips, the tears which ran down their cheeks, and the thanksgivings which they poured forth to the common Father of Mussulmans and Christians, melted even the stout hearts of the English warriors who stood by.

There is a man to whom the conduct of Hastings, through the whole of these proceedings, appears not only excusable but laudable. There is a man who tells us, "that he must really be pardoned if he ventures to characterise as something pre-eminently ridiculous and wicked, the sensibility which would balance against the preservation of British India a little personal suffering, which was applied only so long as the sufferers refused to deliver up a portion of that wealth, the whole of which their own and their mistresses' treason had forfeited." We cannot, we must own, envy the reverend biographer, either his singular notion of what constitutes pre-eminent wickedness, or his equally singular perception of the pre-eminently ridiculous. Is this the generosity of an English soldier? Is this the charity of a Christian priest? Could neither of Mr. Gleig's professions teach him the very rudiments of morality? Or is morality a thing which may be well enough in sermons, but which has nothing to do with biography?

But we must not forget to do justice to Sir Elijah Impey's conduct on this occasion. It was not indeed easy

for him to intrude himself into a business so entirely alien from all his official duties. But there was something inexpressibly alluring, we must suppose, in the peculiar rankness of the infamy which was then to be got at Lucknow. He hurried thither as fast as relays of palankin-bearers could carry him. A crowd of people came before him with affidavits against the Begums, ready drawn in their hands. Those affidavits he did not read. The greater part, indeed, he could not read; for they were in Persian and Hindostanee, and no interpreter was employed. He administered the oath to the deponents, with all possible expedition; and asked not a single question, not even whether they had perused the statements to which they swore. This work performed, he got again into his palankin, and posted back to Calcutta, to be in time for the opening of term. The cause was one which, by his own confession, lay altogether out of his jurisdiction. Under the charter of justice, he had no more right to inquire into crimes committed by natives in Oude, than the Lord President of the Court of Session of Scotland to hold an assize at Exeter. He had no right to try the Begums, nor did he pretend to try them. With what object, then, did he undertake so long a journey? Evidently in order that he might give, in an irregular manner, that sanction which in a regular manner he could not give, to the crimes of those who had recently hired him; and in order that a confused mass of testimony which he did not sift, which he did not even read, might acquire an authority not properly belonging to it, from the signature of the highest judicial functionary in India.

The time was approaching, however, when he was to be stripped of that robe which has, never since the Revolution, been disgraced so foully as by him. The state of India had for some time occupied much of the attention of the British parliament. Towards the close of the American war, two committees of the Commons sat on Eastern af-

fairs. In the one Edmund Burke took the lead. The other was under the presidency of the able and versatile Henry Dundas, then Lord Advocate of Scotland. Great as are the changes which, during the last sixty years, have taken place in our Asiatic dominions, the reports which those committees laid on the table of the House will still be found most interesting and instructive.

There was as yet no connection between the Company and either of the great parties in the state. The ministers had no motive to defend Indian abuses. On the contrary, it was for their interest to show, if possible, that the government and patronage of our Oriental empire might, with advantage, be transferred to themselves. The votes, therefore, which, in consequence of the reports made by the two committees, were passed by the Commons, breathed the spirit of stern and indignant justice. The severest epithets were applied to several of the measures of Hastings, especially to the Rohilla war; and it was resolved, on the motion of Mr. Dundas, that the Company ought to recall a Governor-General who had brought such calamities on the Indian people, and such dishonour on the British name. An act was passed for limiting the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. The bargain which Hastings had made with the Chief Justice was condemned in the strongest terms; and an address was presented to the king, praying that Impey might be ordered home to answer for his misdeeds.

Impey was recalled by a letter from the Secretary of State. But the proprietors of India stock resolutely refused to dismiss Hastings from their service; and passed a resolution affirming, what was undeniably true, that they were entrusted by law with the right of naming and removing their Governor-General; and that they were not bound to obey the directions of a single branch of the legislature with respect to such nomination or removal.

Thus supported by his employers, Hastings remained at

the head of the government of Bengal till the spring of 1785. His administration, so eventful and stormy, closed in almost perfect quiet. In the Council there was no regular opposition to his measures. Peace was restored to India. The Mahratta war had ceased. Hyder was no more. A treaty had been concluded with his son, Tippoo; and the Carnatic had been evacuated by the armies of Mysore. Since the termination of the American war, England had no European enemy or rival in the Eastern seas.

On a general review of the long administration of Hastings, it is impossible to deny that against the great crimes by which it is blemished, we have to set off great public services. England had passed through a perilous crisis. She still, indeed, maintained her place in the foremost rank of European powers; and the manner in which she had defended herself against fearful odds, had inspired surrounding nations with a high opinion both of her spirit and of her strength. Nevertheless, in every part of the world, except one, she had been a loser. Not only had she been compelled to acknowledge the independence of thirteen colonies peopled by her children, and to conciliate the Irish by giving up the right of legislating for them; but, in the Mediterranean, in the Gulf of Mexico, on the coast of Africa, on the continent of America, she had been compelled to cede the fruits of her victories in former wars. Spain regained Minorca and Florida; France regained Senegal, Goree, and several West India Islands. The only quarter of the world in which Britain had lost nothing, was the quarter in which her interests had been committed to the care of Hastings. In spite of the utmost exertions both of European and Asiatic enemies, the power of our country in the East had been greatly augmented. Benares was subjected; the Nabob Vizier reduced to vassalage. That our influence had been thus extended, nay, that Fort William and Fort St. George had not been occupied by hostile armies, was owing, if we

may trust the general voice of the English in India, to the skill and resolution of Hastings.

His internal administration, with all its blemishes, gives him a title to be considered as one of the most remarkable men in our history. He dissolved the double government. He transferred the direction of affairs to English hands. Out of a frightful anarchy, he educed at least a rude and imperfect order. The whole organisation by which justice was dispensed, revenue collected, peace maintained, throughout a territory not inferior in population to the dominions of Louis the Sixteenth, or of the Emperor Joseph, was created and superintended by him. He boasted that every public office, without exception, which existed when he left Bengal was his work. It is quite true that this system, after all the improvements suggested by the experience of sixty years, still needs improvement; and that it was at first far more defective than it now is. But whoever seriously considers what it is to construct from the beginning the whole of a machine so vast and complex as a government, will allow that what Hastings effected deserves high admiration. To compare the most celebrated European ministers to him, seems to us as unjust as it would be to compare the best baker in London with Robinson Crusoe; who, before he could bake a single loaf, had to make his plough and his harrow, his fences and his scarecrows, his sickle and his flail, his mill and his oven.

The just fame of Hastings rises still higher, when we reflect that he was not bred a statesman; that he was sent from school to a counting-house; and that he was employed during the prime of his manhood as a commercial agent far from all intellectual society.

Nor must we forget that all, or almost all, to whom, when placed at the head of affairs, he could apply for assistance, were persons who owed as little as himself, or less than himself, to education. A minister in Europe finds himself, on

the first day on which he commences his functions, surrounded by experienced public servants, the depositaries of official traditions. Hastings had no such help. His own reflection, his own energy, were to supply the place of all Downing street and Somerset House. Having had no facilities for learning, he was forced to teach. He had first to form himself, and then to form his instruments; and this not in a single department, but in all the departments of the administration.

It must be added that, while engaged in this most arduous task, he was constantly trammelled by orders from home, and frequently borne down by a majority in council. The preservation of an empire from a formidable combination of foreign enemies, the construction of a government in all its parts, were accomplished by him; while every ship brought out bales of censure from his employers, and while the records of every consultation were filled with acrimonious minutes by his colleagues. We believe that there never was a public man whose temper was so severely tried;—not Marlborough, when thwarted by the Dutch Deputies;—not Wellington, when he had to deal at once with the Portuguese Regency, the Spanish Juntas, and Mr. Percival. But the temper of Hastings was equal to almost any trial. It was not sweet, but it was calm. Quick and vigorous as his intellect was, the patience with which he endured the most cruel vexations till a remedy could be found, resembled the patience of stupidity. He seems to have been capable of resentment, bitter and long enduring; yet his resentment so seldom hurried him into any blunder, that it may be doubted whether what appeared to be revenge was anything but policy.

The effect of his singular equanimity was, that he always had the full command of all the resources of one of the most fertile minds that ever existed. Accordingly, no complication of perils and embarrassments could perplex him. For every difficulty he had a contrivance ready; and,

whatever may be thought of the justice and humanity of some of his contrivances, it is certain that they seldom failed to serve the purpose for which they were designed.

Together with this extraordinary talent for devising expedients, Hastings possessed, in a very high degree, another talent scarcely less necessary to a man in his situation;—we mean the talent for conducting political controversy. It is as necessary to an English statesman in the East that he should be able to write, as it is to a minister in this country that he should be able to speak. It is chiefly by the oratory of a public man here, that the nation judges of his powers. It is from the letters and reports of a public man in India, that the dispensers of patronage form their estimate of him. In each case, the talent which receives peculiar encouragement is developed, perhaps at the expense of the other powers. In this country, we sometimes hear men speak above their abilities. It is not very unusual to find gentlemen in the Indian service who write above their abilities. The English politician is a little too much of a debater; the Indian politician a little too much of an essayist.

Of the numerous servants of the Company who have distinguished themselves as framers of Minutes and Despatches, Hastings stands at the head. He was indeed the person who gave to the official writing of the Indian governments the character which it still retains. He was matched against no common antagonist. But even Francis was forced to acknowledge, with sullen and resentful candour, that there was no contending against the pen of Hastings. And, in truth, the Governor-General's power of making out a case—of perplexing what it was inconvenient that people should understand—and of setting in the clearest point of view whatever would bear the light, was incomparable. His style must be praised with some reservation. It was in general forcible, pure, and polished; but it was sometimes, though not often, turgid, and, on one or two occasions, even bom-

bastic. Perhaps the fondness of Hastings for Persian literature may have tended to corrupt his taste.

And, since we have referred to his literary tastes, it would be most unjust not to praise the judicious encouragement which, as a ruler, he gave to liberal studies and curious researches. His patronage was extended, with prudent generosity, to voyages, travels, experiments, publications. He did little, it is true, towards introducing into India the learning of the West. To make the young natives of Bengal familiar with Milton and Adam Smith—to substitute the geography, astronomy, and surgery of Europe for the dotages of the Brahminical superstition, or for the imperfect science of ancient Greece transfused through Arabian expositions—this was a scheme reserved to crown the beneficent administration of a far more virtuous ruler. Still, it is impossible to refuse high commendation to a man, who, taken from a ledger to govern an empire, overwhelmed by public business, surrounded by men as busy as himself, and separated by thousands of leagues from almost all literary society, gave, both by his example and by his munificence, a great impulse to learning. In Persian and Arabic literature he was deeply skilled. With the Sanscrit he was not himself acquainted; but those who first brought that language to the knowledge of European students, owed much to his encouragement. It was under his protection that the Asiatic Society commenced its honourable career. That distinguished body selected him to be its first president; but, with excellent taste and feeling, he declined the honour in favour of Sir William Jones. But the chief advantage which the students of Oriental letters derived from his patronage, remains to be mentioned. The Pundits of Bengal had always looked with great jealousy on the attempts of foreigners to pry into those mysteries which were locked up in the sacred dialect. Their religion had been persecuted by the Mahommedans. What they knew of the spirit

of the Portuguese government might warrant them in apprehending persecution from Christians. That apprehension, the wisdom and moderation of Hastings removed. He was the first foreign ruler who succeeded in gaining the confidence of the hereditary priests of India; and who induced them to lay open to English scholars the secrets of the old Brahminical theology and jurisprudence.

It is, indeed, impossible to deny that, in the great art of inspiring large masses of human beings with confidence and attachment, no ruler ever surpassed Hastings. If he had made himself popular with the English by giving up the Bengalees to extortion and oppression, or if, on the other hand, he had conciliated the Bengalees and alienated the English, there would have been no cause for wonder. What is peculiar to him is, that, being the chief of a small band of strangers who exercised boundless power over a great indigenous population, he made himself beloved both by the subject many, and by the dominant few. The affection felt for him by the civil service was singularly ardent and constant. Through all his disasters and perils, his brethren stood by him with steadfast loyalty. The army, at the same time, loved him as armies have seldom loved any but the greatest chiefs who have led them to victory. Even in his disputes with distinguished military men, he could always count on the support of the military profession. While such was his empire over the hearts of his countrymen, he enjoyed among the natives a popularity, such as other governors have perhaps better merited, but such as no other governor has been able to attain. He spoke their vernacular dialects with facility and precision. He was intimately acquainted with their feelings and usages. On one or two occasions, for great ends, he deliberately acted in defiance of their opinions; but on such occasions he gained more in their respect than he lost in their love. In general, he carefully avoided all that could shock

their national or religious prejudices. His administration was indeed in many respects faulty; but the Bengalee standard of good government was not high. Under the Nabobs, the hurricane of Mahratta cavalry had passed annually over the rich alluvial plain. But even the Mahratta shrank from a conflict with the mighty children of the sea; and the immense rice-harvests of the Lower Ganges were safely gathered in, under the protection of the English sword. The first English conquerors had been more rapacious and merciless even than the Mahrattas; but that generation had passed away. Defective as was the police, heavy as were the public burdens, the oldest man in Bengal could probably not recollect a season of equal security and prosperity. For the first time within living memory, the province was placed under a government strong enough to prevent others from robbing, and not inclined to play the robber itself. These things inspired good-will. At the same time, the constant success of Hastings, and the manner in which he extricated himself from every difficulty, made him an object of superstitious admiration; and the more than regal splendour which he sometimes displayed, dazzled a people who have much in common with children. Even now, after the lapse of more than fifty years, the natives of India still talk of him as the greatest of the English, and nurses sing children to sleep with a jingling ballad about the fleet horses and richly-caparisoned elephants of Sahib Warren Hostein.

The gravest offences of which Hastings was guilty, did not affect his popularity with the people of Bengal; for those offences were committed against neighbouring states. Those offences, as our readers must have perceived, we are not disposed to vindicate; yet, in order that the censure may be justly apportioned to the transgression, it is fit that the motive of the criminal should be taken into consideration. The motive which prompted the worst act of Hast-

ings, was misdirected and ill-regulated public spirit. The rules of justice, the sentiments of humanity, the plighted faith of treaties, were in his view as nothing, when opposed to the immediate interests of the state. This is no justification, according to the principles either of morality, or of what we believe to be identical with morality; namely, far-sighted policy. Nevertheless, the common sense of mankind, which in questions of this sort seldom goes far wrong, will always recognise a distinction between crimes which originate in an inordinate zeal for the commonwealth, and crimes which originate in selfish cupidity. To the benefit of this distinction Hastings is fairly entitled. There is, we conceive, no reason to suspect that the Rohilla war, the revolution of Benares, or the spoliation of the Princesses of Oude, added a rupee to his fortune. We will not affirm that, in all pecuniary dealings, he showed that punctilious integrity, that dread of the faintest appearance of evil, which is now the glory of the Indian civil service. But when the school in which he had been trained, and the temptations to which he was exposed, are considered, we are more inclined to praise him for his general uprightness with respect to money, than rigidly to blame him for a few transactions which would now be called indelicate and irregular, but which even now would hardly be designated as corrupt. A rapacious man he certainly was not. Had he been so, he would infallibly have returned to his country the richest subject in Europe. We speak within compass, when we say that, without applying any extraordinary pressure, he might easily have obtained from the zemindars of the Company's provinces, and from neighbouring princes, in the course of thirteen years, more than three millions sterling, and might have outshone the splendour of Carlton House and of the *Palais Royale*. He brought home a fortune such as a Governor-General, fond of state, and careless of thrift, might easily, during so long a tenure of office, save

out of his legal salary. Mrs. Hastings, we are afraid, was less scrupulous. It was generally believed that she accepted presents with great alacrity, and that she thus formed, without the connivance of her husband, a private hoard, amounting to several lacs of rupees. We are the more inclined to give credit to this story, because Mr. Gleig, who cannot but have heard it, does not, as far as we have observed, notice or contradict it.

The influence of Mrs. Hastings over her husband was indeed such, that she might easily have obtained much larger sums than she was ever accused of receiving. At length her health began to give way; and the Governor-General, much against his will, was compelled to send her to England. He seems to have loved her with that love which is peculiar to men of strong minds—to men whose affection is not easily won or widely diffused. The talk of Calcutta ran for some time on the luxurious manner in which he fitted up the round house of an Indiaman for her accommodation—on the profusion of sandal-wood and carved ivory which adorned her cabin—and on the thousands which had been expended in order to procure for her the society of an agreeable female companion during the voyage. We remark here, that the letters of Hastings to his wife are exceedingly characteristic—tender, and full of indications of esteem and confidence; but at the same time, a little more ceremonious than is usual in so intimate a relation. The solemn courtesy with which he compliments "his elegant Marian," reminds us now and then of the dignified air with which Sir Charles Grandison bowed over Miss Byron's hand in the cedar Parlour.

After some months Hastings prepared to follow his wife to England. When it was announced that he was about to quit his office, the feeling of the society which he had so long governed manifested itself by many signs. Addresses poured in from Europeans and Asiatics, from civil function-

aries, soldiers, and traders. On the day on which he delivered up the keys of office, a crowd of friends and admirers formed a lane to the quay where he embarked. Several barges escorted him far down the river; and some attached friends refused to quit him till the low coast of Bengal was fading from the view, and till the pilot was leaving the ship.

Of his voyage little is known, except that he amused himself with books and with his pen; and that, among the compositions by which he beguiled the tediousness of that long leisure, was a pleasing imitation of Horace's *Otium Divos rogat*. This little poem was inscribed to his friend Mr. Shore, afterwards Lord Teignmouth—a man of whose integrity, humanity, and honour, it is impossible to speak too highly; but who, like some other excellent members of the civil service, extended to the conduct of Hastings an indulgence of which his own conduct never stood in need.

The voyage was, for those times, very speedy. Hastings was little more than four months on the sea. In June, 1785, he landed at Plymouth, posted to London, appeared at Court, paid his respects in Leadenhall Street, and then retired with his wife to Cheltenham.

He was greatly pleased with his reception. The King treated him with marked distinction. The Queen, who had already incurred much censure on account of the favour which, in spite of the ordinary severity of her virtue, she had shown to the "elegant Marian," was not less gracious to Hastings. The Directors received him in a solemn sitting; and their chairman read to him a vote of thanks which they had passed without one dissentient voice. "I find myself," said Hastings, in a letter written about a quarter of a year after his arrival in England,—"I find myself everywhere, and universally, treated with evidences, apparent even to my own observation, that I possess the good opinion of my country."

The confident and exulting tone of his correspondence about this time is the more remarkable, because he had already received ample notice of the attack which was in preparation. Within a week after he landed at Plymouth, Burke gave notice in the House of Commons of a motion seriously affecting a gentleman lately returned from India. The session, however, was then so far advanced, that it was impossible to enter on so extensive and important a subject.

Hastings, it is clear, was not sensible of the danger of his position. Indeed that sagacity, that judgment, that readiness in devising expedients, which had distinguished him in the East, seemed now to have forsaken him; not that his abilities were at all impaired; not that he was not still the same man who had triumphed over Francis and Nuncomar, who had made the Chief Justice and the Nabob Vizier his tools, who had deposed Cheyte Sing, and repelled Hyder Ali;—but an oak, as Mr. Grattan finely said, should not be transplanted at fifty. A man who, having left England when a boy, returns to it after thirty or forty years passed in India, will find, be his talents what they may, that he has much both to learn and to unlearn before he can take a place among English statesmen. The working of a representative system, the war of parties, the arts of debate, the influence of the press, are startling novelties to him. Surrounded on every side by new machines and new tactics, he is as much bewildered as Hannibal would have been at Waterloo, or Themistocles at Trafalgar. His very acuteness deludes him. His very vigour causes him to stumble. The more correct his maxims, when applied to the state of society to which he is accustomed, the more certain they are to lead him astray. This was strikingly the case with Hastings. In India he had a bad hand; but he was master of the game, and he won every stake. In England he held excellent cards, if he had known how to play them; and it

was chiefly by his own errors that he was brought to the verge of ruin..

Of all his errors the most serious was perhaps the choice of a champion. Clive, in similar circumstances, had made a singularly happy selection. He put himself into the hands of Wedderburn, afterwards Lord Loughborough, one of the few great advocates who have also been great in the House of Commons. To the defence of Clive, therefore, nothing was wanting—neither learning nor knowledge of the world, neither forensic acuteness nor that eloquence which charms political assemblies. Hastings intrusted his interests to a very different person, a major in the Bengal army named Scott. This gentleman had been sent over from India some time before as the agent of the Governor-General. It was rumoured that his services were rewarded with oriental munificence; and we believe that he received much more than Hastings could conveniently spare. The Major obtained a seat in Parliament, and was there regarded as the organ of his employer. It was evidently impossible that a gentleman so situated, could speak with the authority which belongs to an independent position. Nor had the agent of Hastings the talents necessary for obtaining the ear of an assembly which, accustomed to listen to great orators, had naturally become fastidious. He was always on his legs; he was very tedious; and he had only one topic, the merits and wrongs of Hastings. Everybody who knows the House of Commons will easily guess what followed. The Major was soon considered as the greatest *bore* of his time. His exertions were not confined to Parliament. There was hardly a day on which the newspapers did not contain some puff upon Hastings, signed *Asiaticus* or *Bengalensis*, but known to be written by the indefatigable Scott; and hardly a month in which some bulky pamphlet on the same subject, and from the same pen, did not pass to the trunkmakers and the pastry-cooks. As to this gen-

tleman's capacity for conducting a delicate question through Parliament, our readers will want no evidence beyond that which they will find in letters preserved in these volumes. We will give a single specimen of his temper and judgment. He designated the greatest man then living as "that reptile Mr. Burke."

In spite, however, of this unfortunate choice, the general aspect of affairs was favourable to Hastings. The King was on his side. The Company and its servants were zealous in his cause. Among public men he had many ardent friends. Such were Lord Mansfield, who had outlived the vigour of his body but not of his mind; and Lord Lansdowne, who, though unconnected with any party, retained the importance which belongs to great talents and knowledge. The ministers were generally believed to be favourable to the late Governor-General. They owed their power to the clamour which had been raised against Mr. Fox's East India bill. The authors of that bill, when accused of invading vested rights, and of setting up powers unknown to the constitution, had defended themselves by pointing to the crimes of Hastings, and by arguing that abuses so extraordinary justified extraordinary measures. Those who, by opposing that bill, had raised themselves to the head of affairs, would naturally be inclined to extenuate the evils which had been made the plea for administering so violent a remedy; and such, in fact, was their general disposition. The Lord Chancellor Thurlow, in particular, whose great place and force of intellect gave him a weight in the government inferior only to that of Mr. Pitt, espoused the cause of Hastings with indecorous violence. Mr. Pitt, though he had censured many parts of the Indian system, had studiously abstained from saying a word against the late chief of the Indian government. To Major Scott, indeed, the young minister had in private extolled Hastings as a great, a wonderful man, who had the

highest claims on the government. There was only one objection to granting all that so eminent a servant of the public could ask:—the resolution of censure still remained on the journals of the House of Commons. That resolution was, indeed, unjust; but, till it was rescinded, could the minister advise the King to bestow any mark of approbation on the person censured? If Major Scott is to be trusted, Mr. Pitt declared that this was the only reason which prevented the government from conferring a peerage on the late Governor-General. Mr. Dundas was the only important member of the administration who was deeply committed to a different view of the subject. He had moved the resolutions which created the difficulty; but even from him little was to be apprehended. Since he presided over the committe on eastern affairs, great changes had taken place. He was surrounded by new allies; he had fixed his hopes on new objects; and whatever may have been his good qualities—and he had many—flattery itself never reckoned rigid consistency in the number.

From the ministry, therefore, Hastings had every reason to expect support; and the ministry was very powerful. The opposition was loud and vehement against him. But the opposition, though formidable from the wealth and influence of some of its members, and from the admirable talents and eloquence of others, was outnumbered in Parliament, and odious throughout the country. Nor, as far as we can judge, was the opposition generally desirous to engage in so serious an undertaking as the impeachment of an Indian Governor. Such an impeachment must last for years. It must impose on the chiefs of the party an immense load of labour. Yet it could scarcely, in any manner, affect the event of the great political game. The followers of the coalition were therefore more inclined to revile Hastings than to prosecute him. They lost no opportunity of coupling his name with the names of the

most hateful tyrants of whom history makes mention. The wits of Brookes's aimed their keenest sarcasms both at his public, and at his domestic life. Some fine diamonds which he had presented, as it was rumoured, to the royal family, and a certain richly carved ivory bed which the Queen had done him the honour to accept from him, were favourite subjects of ridicule. One lively poet proposed, that the great acts of the fair Marian's present husband should be immortalised by the pencil of his predecessor; and that Imhoff should be employed to embellish the House of Commons with paintings of the bleeding Rohillas, of Nuncomar swinging, of Cheyte Sing letting himself down to the Ganges. Another, in an exquisitely humorous parody of Virgil's third eclogue, propounded the question—what that mineral could be of which the rays had power to make the most austere of princesses the friend of a wanton. A third described, with gay malevolence, the gorgeous appearance of Mrs. Hastings at St. James's, the galaxy of jewels, torn from Begums, which adorned her head-dress, her necklace gleaming with future votes, and the depending questions that shone upon her ears. Satirical attacks of this description, and perhaps a motion for a vote of censure, would have satisfied the great body of the opposition. But there were two men whose indignation was not to be so appeased, Philip Francis and Edmund Burke.

Francis had recently entered the House of Commons, and had already established a character there for industry and talent. He laboured indeed under one most unfortunate defect—want of fluency. But he occasionally expressed himself with a dignity and energy worthy of the greatest orators. Before he had been many days in parliament, he incurred the bitter dislike of Pitt, who constantly treated him with as much asperity as the laws of debate would allow. Neither lapse of years nor change

of scene had mitigated the enmities which Francis had brought back from the East. After his usual fashion, he mistook his malevolence for virtue; nursed it, as preachers tell us that we ought to nurse our good dispositions; and paraded it, on all occasions, with Pharisaical ostentation.

The zeal of Burke was still fiercer; but it was far purer. Men unable to understand the elevation of his mind, have tried to find out some discreditable motive for the vehemence and pertinacity which he showed on this occasion. But they have altogether failed. The idle story that he had some private slight to revenge, has long been given up, even by the advocates of Hastings. Mr. Gleig supposes that Burke was actuated by party spirit, that he retained a bitter remembrance of the fall of the coalition, that he attributed that fall to the exertions of the East India interest, and that he considered Hastings as the head and the personification of that interest. This explanation seems to be sufficiently refuted by a reference to dates. The hostility of Burke to Hastings commenced long before the coalition; and lasted long after Burke had become a strenuous supporter of those by whom the coalition had been defeated. It began when Burke and Fox, closely allied together, were attacking the influence of the crown, and calling for peace with the American republic. It continued till Burke, alienated from Fox, and loaded with the favours of the crown, died, preaching a crusade against the French republic. It seems absurd to attribute to the events of 1784 an enmity which began in 1781, and which retained undiminished force long after persons far more deeply implicated than Hastings in the events of 1784, had been cordially forgiven. And why should we look for any other explanation of Burke's conduct than that which we find on the surface? The plain truth is, that Hastings had committed some great crimes, and that the thought of those crimes made the blood of Burke boil in his veins; for

Burke was a man in whom compassion for suffering, and hatred of injustice and tyranny, were as strong as in Las Casas, or Clarkson. And although in him, as in Las Casas, and in Clarkson, these noble feelings were alloyed with the infirmity which belongs to human nature, he is, like them, entitled to this great praise, that he devoted years of intense labour to the service of a people with whom he had neither blood nor language, neither religion nor manners in common; and from whom no requital, no thanks, no applause could be expected.

His knowledge of India was such as few, even of those Europeans who have passed many years in that country, have attained; and such as certainly was never attained by any public man who had not quitted Europe. He had studied the history, the laws, and the usages of the East with an industry, such as is seldom found united to so much genius and so much sensibility. Others have perhaps been equally laborious, and have collected an equal mass of materials; but the manner in which Burke brought his higher powers of intellect to work on statements of facts, and on tables of figures, was peculiar to himself. In every part of those huge bales of Indian information, which repelled almost all other readers, his mind, at once philosophical and poetical, found something to instruct or to delight. His reason analysed and digested those vast and shapeless masses; his imagination animated and coloured them. Out of darkness, and dulness, and confusion, he drew a rich abundance of ingenious theories and vivid pictures. He had, in the highest degree, that noble faculty, whereby man is able to live in the past and in the future, in the distant and in the unreal. India and its inhabitants were not to him, as to most Englishmen, mere names and abstractions, but a real country and a real people. The burning sun; the strange vegetation of the palm and the cocoa-trees; the rice-field and the tank; the huge trees,

older than the Mogul empire, under which the village crowds assemble; the thatched roof of the peasant's hut, and the rich tracery of the mosque, where the imaum prayed with his face to Mecca; the drums, and banners, and gaudy idols; the devotee swinging in the air; the graceful maiden, with the pitcher on her head, descending the steps to the river-side; the black faces, the long beards, the yellow streaks of sect; the turbans and the flowing robes; the spears and the silver maces; the elephants with their canopies of state; the gorgeous palankin of the prince, and the close litter of the noble lady—all those things were to him as the objects amidst which his own life had been passed—as the objects which lay on the road between Beaconsfield and St. James's Street. All India was present to the eye of his mind, from the halls where suitors laid gold and perfumes at the feet of sovereigns, to the wild moor where the gipsy-camp was pitched—from the bazars, humming like bee-hives with the crowd of buyers and sellers, to the jungle where the lonely courier shakes his bunch of iron rings to scare away the hyænas. He had just as lively an idea of the insurrection at Benares as of Lord George Gordon's riots, and of the execution of Nuncomar as of the execution of Dr. Dodd. Oppression in Bengal was to him the same thing as oppression in the streets of London.

He saw that Hastings had been guilty of some most unjustifiable acts. All that followed was natural and necessary in a mind like Burke's. His imagination and his passions, once excited, hurried him beyond the bounds of justice and good sense. His reason, powerful as it was, was reduced to be the slave of feelings which it should have controlled. His indignation, virtuous in its origin, acquired too much of the character of personal aversion. He could see no mitigating circumstance, no redeeming merit. His temper, which, though generous and affectionate, had

always been irritable, had now been almost savage by bodily infirmities and mental vexations. Conscious of great powers and great virtues, he found himself, in age and poverty, a mark for the hatred of a perfidious court, and a deluded people. In Parliament his eloquence was out of date. A young generation, which knew him not, had filled the House. Whenever he rose to speak, his voice was drowned by the unseemly interruptions of lads, who were in their cradles when his orations on the Stamp Act called forth the applause of the great Earl of Chatham. These things had produced on his proud and sensitive spirit an effect at which we cannot wonder. He could no longer discuss any question with calmness, or make allowances for honest difference of opinion. Those who think that he was more violent and acrimonious in debates about India than on other occasions, are ill-informed respecting the last years of his life. In the discussions on the Commercial Treaty with the court of Versailles, on the Regency, on the French Revolution, he showed even more virulence than in conducting the impeachment. Indeed it may be remarked, that the very persons who represented him as a mischievous maniac for condemning in burning words the Rohilla war, and the spoliation of the Begums, exalted him into an inspired prophet as soon as he began to declaim, with greater vehemence, and not with greater reason, against the taking of the Bastile, and the insults offered to Marie Antoinette. To us he appears to have been neither a maniac in the former case, nor a prophet in the latter; but in both cases a great and good man, led into extravagance by a tempestuous sensibility, which domineered over all his faculties. It may be doubted whether the personal antipathy of Francis, or the nobler indignation of Burke, would have led their party to adopt extreme measures against Hastings, if his own conduct had been judicious. He should have felt that, great as his public services had

been, he was not faultless; and should have been content to make his escape, without aspiring to the honours of a triumph. He and his agent took a different view. They were impatient for the rewards which, as they conceived, were deferred only till Burke's attack should be over. They accordingly resolved to force a decisive action with an enemy, for whom, had they been wise, they would have made a bridge of gold. On the first day of the session of 1786, Major Scott reminded Burke of the notice given in the preceding year, and asked whether it was seriously intended to bring any charge against the late Governor-General. This challenge left no course open to the opposition, except to come forward as accusers, or to acknowledge themselves calumniators. The administration of Hastings had not been so blameless, nor was the great party of Fox and North so feeble, that it could be prudent to venture on so bold a defiance. The leaders of the opposition instantly returned the only answer which they could with honour return; and the whole party was irrevocably pledged to a prosecution.

Burke began his operations by applying for Papers. Some of the documents for which he asked were refused by the ministers, who, in the debate, held language such as strongly confirmed the prevailing opinion, that they intended to support Hastings. In April, the charges were laid on the table. They had been drawn up by Burke with great ability, though in a form too much resembling that of a pamphlet. Hastings was furnished with a copy of the accusation; and it was intimated to him, that he might, if he thought fit, be heard in his own defence at the bar of the Commons.

Here again Hastings was pursued by the same fatality which had attended him ever since the day when he set foot on English ground. It seemed to be decreed that this man, so politic and so successful in the East, should commit

nothing but blunders in Europe. Any judicious adviser would have told him that the best thing which he could do would be to make an eloquent, forcible, and affecting oration at the bar of the House: but that, if he could not trust himself to speak, but found it necessary to read, he ought to be as concise as possible. Audiences accustomed to extemporaneous debating of the highest excellence, are always impatient of long written compositions. Hastings, however, sat down as he would have done at the Government-house in Bengal, and prepared a paper of immense length. That paper, if recorded on the consultations of an Indian administration, would have been justly praised as a very able minute, but it was now out of place. It fell flat, as the best written defence must have fallen flat, on an assembly accustomed to the animated and strenuous conflicts of Pitt and Fox. The members, as soon as their curiosity about the face and demeanour of so eminent a stranger was satisfied, walked away to dinner, and left Hastings to tell his story till midnight to the clerks and the serjeant-at-arms.

All preliminary steps having been duly taken, Burke, in the beginning of June, brought forward the charge relating to the Rohilla war. He acted discreetly in placing this accusation in the van; for Dundas had moved, and the House had adopted a resolution, condemning, in the most severe terms, the policy followed by Hastings with regard to Rohilcund. Dundas had little, or rather nothing, to say in defence of his own consistency; but he put a bold face on the matter, and opposed the motion. Among other things, he declared that, though he still thought the Rohilla war unjustifiable, he considered the services which Hastings had subsequently rendered to the state as sufficient to atone even for so great an offence. Pitt did not speak, but voted with Dundas; and Hastings was absolved by a hundred and nineteen votes against sixty-seven.

Hastings was now confident of victory. It seemed, in-

deed, that he had reason to be so. The Rohilla war was, of all his measures, that which his accusers might with the greatest advantage assail. It had been condemned by the Court of Directors. It had been condemned by the House of Commons. It had been condemned by Mr. Dundas, who had since become the chief minister of the Crown for Indian affairs. Yet Burke, having chosen the strong ground, had been completely defeated on it. That, having failed here, he should succeed on any point, was generally thought impossible. It was rumoured at the clubs and coffee-houses, that one, or perhaps two more charges would be brought forward; that if, on those charges, the sense of the House of Commons should be against impeachment, the opposition would let the matter drop; that Hastings would be immediately raised to the peerage, decorated with the star of the Bath, sworn of the privy council, and invited to lend the assistance of his talents and experience to the India board. Lord Thurlow indeed, some months before, had spoken with contempt of the scruples which prevented Pitt from calling Hastings to the House of Lords; and had even said that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer was afraid of the Commons, there was nothing to prevent the Keeper of the Great Seal from taking the royal pleasure about a patent of peerage. The very title was chosen. Hastings was to be Lord Daylesford. For, through all changes of scene, and changes of fortune, remained unchanged his attachment to the spot which had witnessed the greatness and the fall of his family, and which had borne so great a part in the first dreams of his young ambition.

But in a very few days these fair prospects were overcast. On the 13th of June, Mr. Fox brought forward, with great ability and eloquence, the charge respecting the treatment of Cheyte Sing. Francis followed on the same side. The friends of Hastings were in high spirits when Pitt rose. With his usual abundance and felicity of language,

the minister gave his opinion on the case. He maintained that the Governor-General was justified in calling on the Rajah of Benares for pecuniary assistance, and in imposing a fine when that assistance was contumaciously withheld. He also thought that the conduct of the Governor-General during the insurrection, had been distinguished by ability and presence of mind. He censured, with great bitterness, the conduct of Francis, both in India and in Parliament, as most dishonest and malignant. The necessary inference from Pitt's arguments seemed to be, that Hastings ought to be honourably acquitted; and both the friends and the opponents of the minister expected from him a declaration to that effect. To the astonishment of all parties, he concluded by saying, that though he thought it right in Hastings to fine Cheyte Sing for contumacy, yet the amount of the fine was too great for the occasion. On this ground, and on this ground alone, did Mr. Pitt, applauding every other part of the conduct of Hastings with regard to Benares, declare that he should vote in favour of Mr. Fox's motion.

The house was thunderstruck; and it well might be so. For the wrong done to Cheyte Sing, even had it been as flagitious as Fox and Francis contended, was a trifle when compared with the horrors which had been inflicted on Rohilcund. But if Mr. Pitt's view of the case of Cheyte Sing were correct, there was no ground at all for an impeachment, or even for a vote of censure. If the offence of Hastings was really no more than this, that having a right to impose a mulct, the amount of which mulct was not defined, but was left to be settled by his discretion, he had, not for his own advantage, but for that of the state, demanded too much—was this an offence which required a criminal proceeding of the highest solemnity; a criminal proceeding, to which, during sixty years, no public functionary had been subjected? We can see, we think, in what way a man of

sense and integrity might have been induced to take any course respecting Hastings, except the course which Mr. Pitt took. Such a man might have thought a great example necessary, for the preventing of injustice, and for the vindicating of the national honour; and might, on that ground, have voted for impeachment both on the Rohilla charge, and on the Benares charge. Such a man might have thought that the offences of Hastings had been atoned for by great services, and might, on that ground, have voted against the impeachment on both charges. With great diffidence, we give it as our opinion, that the most correct course would, on the whole, have been to impeach on the Rohilla charge, and to acquit on the Benares charge. Had the Benares charge appeared to us in the same light in which it appeared to Mr. Pitt, we should, without hesitation, have voted for acquittal on that charge. The one course which it is inconceivable that any man of a tenth part of Mr. Pitt's abilities can have honestly taken, was the course which he took. He acquitted Hastings on the Rohilla charge. He softened down the Benares charge till it became no charge at all; and then he pronounced that it contained matter for impeachment.

Nor must it be forgotten, that the principal reason assigned by the ministry for not impeaching Hastings on account of the Rohilla war was, that the delinquencies of the early part of his administration had been atoned for by the excellence of the later part. Was it not most extraordinary, that men who had held this language could afterwards vote that the later part of his administration furnished matter for no less than twenty articles of impeachment? They first contended that the conduct of Hastings in 1780 and 1781 was so highly meritorious, that, like works of supererogation in the Catholic theology, it ought to be efficacious for the cancelling of former offences; and they then prosecuted him for his conduct in 1780 and 1781.

The general astonishment was the greater, because, only twenty-four hours before, the members on whom the minister could depend had received the usual notes from the treasury, begging them to be in their places and to vote against Mr. Fox's motion. It was asserted by Mr. Hastings, that early on the morning of the very day on which the debate took place, Dundas called on Pitt, woke him, and was closeted with him many hours. The result of this conference was a determination to give up the late Governor-General to the vengeance of the opposition. It was impossible even for the most powerful minister to carry all his followers with him in so strange a course. Several persons high in office, the Attorney-General, Mr. Grenville, and Lord Mulgrave, voted against Mr. Pitt. But the devoted adherents who stood by the head of the government without asking questions, were sufficiently numerous to turn the scale. A hundred and nineteen members voted for Mr. Fox's motion; seventy-nine against it. Dundas silently followed Pitt.

That good and great man, the late William Wilberforce, often related the events of this remarkable night. He described the amazement of the House, and the bitter reflections which were muttered against the Prime Minister by some of the habitual supporters of government. Pitt himself appeared to feel that his conduct required some explanation. He left the treasury bench, sat for some time by Mr. Wilberforce, and very earnestly declared that he had found it impossible, as a man of conscience, to stand any longer by Hastings. The business, he said, was too bad. Mr. Wilberforce, we are bound to add, fully believed that his friend was sincere; and that the suspicions to which this mysterious affair gave rise, were altogether unfounded.

Those suspicions, indeed, were such as it is painful to mention. The friends of Hastings, most of whom, it is to be observed, generally supported the administration, affirmed

that the motive of Pitt and Dundas was jealousy. Hastings was personally a favourite with the King. He was the idol of the East India Company, and of its servants. If he were absolved by the Commons, seated among the Lords, admitted to the Board of Control, closely allied with the strong-minded and imperious Thurlow, was it not almost certain that he would soon draw to himself the entire management of Eastern affairs? Was it not possible that he might become a formidable rival in the cabinet? It had probably got abroad that very singular communications had taken place between Thurlow and Major Scott; and that, if the first Lord of the Treasury was afraid to recommend Hastings for a peerage, the Chancellor was ready to take the responsibility of that step on himself. Of all ministers, Pitt was the least likely to submit with patience to such an encroachment on his functions. If the Commons impeached Hastings, all danger was at an end. The proceeding, however it might terminate, would probably last some years. In the mean time, the accused person would be excluded from honours and public employments, and could scarcely venture even to pay his duty at court. Such were the motives attributed, by a great part of the public, to the young minister, whose ruling passion was generally believed to be avarice of power.

The prorogation soon interrupted the discussions respecting Hastings. In the following year, those discussions were resumed. The charge touching the spoliation of the Begums was brought forward by Sheridan, in a speech which was so imperfectly reported that it may be said to be wholly lost; but which was, without doubt, the most elaborately brilliant of all the productions of his ingenious mind. The impression which it produced was such as has never been equalled. He sat down, not merely amidst cheering, but amidst the loud clapping of hands, in which the Lords below the bar, and the strangers in the gallery,

joined. The excitement of the House was such that no other speaker could obtain a hearing, and the debate was adjourned. The impression made by this remarkable display of eloquence on severe and experienced critics, whose discernment may be supposed to have been quickened by emulation, was deep and permanent. Mr. Windham, twenty years later, said that the speech deserved all its fame, and was, in spite of some faults of taste, such as were seldom wanting either in the literary or in the parliamentary performances of Sheridan, the greatest that had been delivered within the memory of man. Mr. Fox, about the same time, being asked by the late Lord Holland what was the best speech ever made in the House of Commons, assigned the first place, without hesitation, to the great oration of Sheridan on the Oude charge.

When the debate was resumed, the tide ran so strongly against the accused, that his friends were coughed and scraped down. Pitt declared himself for Sheridan's motion; and the question was carried by a hundred and seventy-five votes against sixty-eight.

The opposition, flushed with victory, and strongly supported by the public sympathy, proceeded to bring forward a succession of charges relating chiefly to pecuniary transactions. The friends of Hastings were discouraged, and, having now no hope of being able to avert an impeachment, were not very strenuous in their exertions. At length the House, having agreed to twenty articles of charge, directed Burke to go before the Lords, and to impeach the late Governor-General of High Crimes and Misdemeanours. Hastings was at the same time arrested by the Sergeant-at-Arms, and carried to the bar of the Peers.

The session was now within ten days of its close. It was, therefore, impossible that any progress could be made in the trial till the next year. Hastings was admitted to

bail; and further proceedings were postponed till the Houses should reassemble.

When Parliament met in the following winter, the Commons proceeded to elect a committee for managing the impeachment. Burke stood at the head, and with him were associated most of the leading members of the opposition. But when the name of Francis was read, a fierce contention arose. It was said that Francis and Hastings were notoriously on bad terms; that they had been at feud during many years; that on one occasion their mutual aversion had impelled them to seek each other's lives; and that it would be improper and indelicate to select a private enemy to be a public accuser. It was urged on the other side with great force, particularly by Mr. Windham, that impartiality, though the first duty of a judge, had never been reckoned among the qualities of an advocate; that in the ordinary administration of criminal justice in England, the aggrieved party, the very last person who ought to be admitted into the jury-box, is the prosecutor; that what was wanted in a manager was, not that he should be free from bias, but that he should be energetic, able, well-informed, and active. The ability and information of Francis were admitted; and the very animosity with which he was reproached, whether a virtue or a vice, was at least a pledge for his energy and activity. It seems difficult to refute these arguments. But the inveterate hatred borne by Francis to Hastings had excited general disgust. The House decided that Francis should not be a manager. Pitt voted with the majority, Dundas with the minority.

In the mean time, the preparations for the trial had proceeded rapidly; and on the 13th of February, 1788, the sittings of the Court commenced. There have been spectacles more dazzling to the eye, more gorgeous with jewellery and cloth of gold, more attractive to grown-up children, than that which was then exhibited at Westminster; but,

perhaps, there never was a spectacle so well calculated to strike a highly cultivated, a reflecting, an imaginative mind. All the various kinds of interest which belong to the near and to the distant, to the present and to the past, were collected on one spot, and in one hour. All the talents and all the accomplishments which are developed by liberty and civilisation were now displayed, with every advantage that could be derived both from co-operation and from contrast. Every step in the proceedings carried the mind either backward, through many troubled centuries, to the days when the foundations of the constitution were laid; or far away, over boundless seas and deserts, to dusky nations living under strange stars, worshipping strange gods, and writing strange characters from right to left. The High Court of Parliament was to sit, according to forms handed down from the days of the Plantagenets, on an Englishman accused of exercising tyranny over the lord of the holy city of Benares, and the ladies of the princely house of Oude.

The place was worthy of such a trial. It was the great hall of William Rufus; the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty Kings; the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon and the just absolution of Somers; the hall where the eloquence of Strafford had for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with just resentment; the hall where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame. Neither military nor civil pomp was wanting. The avenues were lined with grenadiers. The streets were kept clear by cavalry. The peers, robed in gold and ermine, were marshalled by the heralds under Garter King-at-Arms. The judges, in their vestments of state, attended to give advice on points of law. Near a hundred and seventy Lords, three-fourths of the Upper House, as the Upper House then was, walked in solemn order from their usual place of assembling to the

tribunal. The junior baron present led the way—Lord Heathfield, recently ennobled for his memorable defence of Gibraltar against the fleets and armies of France and Spain. The long procession was closed by the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal of the realm, by the great dignitaries, and by the brothers and sons of the King. Last of all came the Prince of Wales, conspicuous by his fine person and noble bearing. The grey old walls were hung with scarlet. The long galleries were crowded by such an audience as has rarely excited the fears or the emulation of an orator. There were gathered together, from all parts of a great, free, enlightened, and prosperous realm, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art. There were seated around the Queen the fair-haired young daughters of the house of Brunswick. There the Ambassadors of great Kings and Commonwealths gazed with admiration on a spectacle which no other country in the world could present. There Siddons, in the prime of her majestic beauty, looked with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage. There the historian of the Roman Empire thought of the days when Cicero pleaded the cause of Sicily against Verres; and when, before a senate which had still some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa. There were seen, side by side, the greatest painter and the greatest scholar of the age. The spectacle had allured Reynolds from that easel which has preserved to us the thoughtful foreheads of so many writers and statesmen, and the sweet smiles of so many noble matrons. It had induced Parr to suspend his labours in that dark and profound mine from which he had extracted a vast treasure of erudition—a treasure too often buried in the earth, too often paraded with injudicious and inelegant ostentation; but still precious, massive, and splendid. There appeared the voluptuous charms of her to whom the heir of the throne had in secret

plighted his faith. There, too, was she, the beautiful mother of a beautiful race, the Saint Cecilia, whose delicate features, lighted up by love and music, art has rescued from the common decay. There were the members of that brilliant society which quoted, criticised, and exchanged repartees, under the rich peacock hangings of Mrs. Montague. And there the ladies, whose lips, more persuasive than those of Fox himself, had carried the Westminster election against palace and treasury, shone round Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire.

The Sergeants made proclamation. Hastings advanced to the bar, and bent his knee. The culprit was indeed not unworthy of that great presence. He had ruled an extensive and populous country, had made laws and treaties, had sent forth armies, had set up and pulled down princes. And in his high place he had so borne himself, that all had feared him, that most had loved him, and that hatred itself could deny him no title to glory, except virtue. He looked like a great man, and not like a bad man. A person small and emaciated, yet deriving dignity from a carriage which, while it indicated deference to the court, indicated also habitual self-possession and self-respect;—a high and intellectual forehead;—a brow pensive, but not gloomy;—a mouth of inflexible decision; a face pale and worn, but serene, on which was written, as legibly as under the great picture in the council-chamber at Calcutta, *Mens æqua in arduis;*—such was the aspect with which the great proconsul presented himself to his judges.

His counsel accompanied him, men all of whom were afterwards raised by their talents and learning to the highest posts in their profession,—the bold and strong minded Law, afterwards Chief-justice of the King's Bench; the more humane and eloquent Dallas, afterwards Chief-justice of the Common Pleas; and Plomer, who, nearly twenty years later, successfully conducted in the same high court

the defence of Lord Melville, and subsequently became Vice-chancellor and master of the Rolls.

But neither the culprit nor his advocates attracted so much notice as the accusers. In the midst of the blaze of red drapery, a space had been fitted up with green benches and tables for the Commons. The managers, with Burke at their head, appeared in full dress. The collectors of gossip did not fail to remark that even Fox, generally so regardless of his appearance, had paid to the illustrious tribunal the compliment of wearing a bag and sword. Pitt had refused to be one of the conductors of the impeachment; and his commanding, copious, and sonorous eloquence, was wanting to that great muster of various talents. Age and blindness had unfitted Lord North for the duties of a public prosecutor; and his friends were left without the help of his excellent sense, his tact, and his urbanity. But, in spite of the absence of these two distinguished members of the Lower House, the box in which the managers stood, contained an array of speakers such as perhaps had not appeared together since the great age of Athenian eloquence. There stood Fox and Sheridan, the English Demosthenes, and the English Hyperides. There was Burke, ignorant, indeed, or negligent of the art of adapting his reasonings and his style to the capacity and taste of his hearers; but in aptitude of comprehension and richness of imagination superior to every orator, ancient or modern. There, with eyes reverentially fixed on Burke, appeared the finest gentleman of the age—his form developed by every manly exercise—his face beaming with intelligence and spirit—the ingenious, the chivalrous, the high-souled Windham. Nor, though surrounded by such men, did the youngest manager pass unnoticed. At an age when most of those who distinguish themselves in life are still contending for prizes and fellowships at college, he had won for himself a conspicuous place in Parliament. No advantage of for-

tune or connection was wanting that could set off to the height his splendid talents and his unblemished honour. At twenty-three he had been thought worthy to be ranked with the veteran statesmen who appeared as the delegates of the British Commons, at the bar of the British nobility. All who stood at that bar, save him alone, are gone—culprit, advocates, accusers. To the generation which is now in the vigour of life, he is the sole representative of a great age which has passed away. But those who, within the last ten years, have listened with delight, till the morning sun shone on the tapestries of the House of Lords, to the lofty and animated eloquence of Charles Earl Grey, are able to form some estimate of the powers of a race of men among whom he was not the foremost.

The charges and the answers of Hastings were first read. This ceremony occupied two whole days, and was rendered less tedious than it would otherwise have been, by the silver voice and just emphasis of Cowper, the clerk of the court, a near relation of the amiable poet. On the third day Burke rose. Four sittings of the court were occupied by his opening speech, which was intended to be a general introduction to all the charges. With an exuberance of thought and a splendour of diction which more than satisfied the highly-raised expectation of the audience, he described the character and institutions of the natives of India; recounted the circumstances in which the Asiatic empire of Britain had originated; and set forth the constitution of the Company, and of the English Presidencies. Having thus attempted to communicate to his hearers an idea of Eastern society, as vivid as that which existed in his own mind, he proceeded to arraign the administration of Hastings, as systematically conducted in defiance of morality and public law. The energy and pathos of the great orator extorted expressions of unwonted admiration even from the stern and hostile Chancellor; and, for a moment, seemed to

pierce even the resolute heart of the defendant. The ladies in the galleries, unaccustomed to such displays of eloquence, excited by the solemnity of the occasion, and perhaps not unwilling to display their taste and sensibility, were in a state of uncontrollable emotion. Handkerchiefs were pulled out; smelling-bottles were handed round; hysterical sobs and screams were heard; and Mrs. Sheridan was carried out in a fit. At length the orator concluded. Raising his voice till the old arches of Irish oak resounded—"Therefore," said he, "hath it with all confidence been ordered by the Commons of Great Britain, that I impeach Warren Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanours. I impeach him in the name of the Commons House of Parliament, whose trust he has betrayed. I impeach him in the name of the English nation, whose ancient honour he has sullied. I impeach him in the name of the people of India, whose rights he has trodden under foot, and whose country he has turned into a desert. Lastly, in the name of human nature itself, in the name of both sexes, in the name of every age, in the name of every rank, I impeach the common enemy and oppressor of all!"

When the deep murmur of various emotions had subsided, Mr. Fox rose to address the Lords respecting the course of proceeding to be followed. The wish of the accusers was, that the Court would bring to a close the investigation of the first charge before the second was opened. The wish of Hastings and his counsel was, that the managers should open all the charges, and produce all the evidence for the prosecution, before the defence began. The Lords retired to their own house, to consider the question. The Chancellor took the side of Hastings. Lord Loughborough, who was now in opposition, supported the demand of the managers. The division showed which way the inclination of the tribunal leaned. A majority of near three to one

decided in favour of the course for which Hastings contended.

When the Court sat again, Mr. Fox, assisted by Mr. Grey, opened the charge respecting Cheyte Sing, and several days were spent in reading papers and hearing witnesses. The next article was that relating to the Princesses of Oude. The conduct of this part of the case was intrusted to Sheridan. The curiosity of the public to hear him was unbounded. His sparkling and highly-finished declamation lasted two days; but the Hall was crowded to suffocation during the whole time. It was said that fifty guineas had been paid for a single ticket. Sheridan, when he concluded, contrived, with a knowledge of stage-effect which his father might have envied, to sink back, as if exhausted, into the arms of Burke, who hugged him with the energy of generous admiration!

June was now far advanced. The session could not last much longer, and the progress which had been made in the impeachment was not very satisfactory. There were twenty charges. On two only of these had even the case for the prosecution been heard: and it was now a year since Hastings had been admitted to bail.

The interest taken by the public in the trial was great when the Court began to sit, and rose to the height when Sheridan spoke on the charge relating to the Begums. From that time the excitement went down fast. The spectacle had lost the attraction of novelty. The great displays of rhetoric were over. What was behind was not of a nature to entice men of letters from their books in the morning, or to tempt ladies who had left the masquerade at two, to be out of bed before eight. There remained examinations and cross-examinations. There remained statements of accounts. There remained the reading of papers, filled with words unintelligible to English ears—with lacs and crores, zemindars and aumils, sunnuds and perwannahs,

jaghires and nuzzurs. There remained bickerings, not always carried on with the best taste, or with the best temper, between the managers of the impeachment and the counsel for the defence, particularly between Mr. Burke and Mr. Law. There remained the endless marches and countermarches of the Peers between their house and the Hall; for as often as a point of law was to be discussed, their lordships retired to discuss it apart; and the consequence was, as the late Lord Stanhope wittily said, that the judges walked and the trial stood still.

It is to be added, that in the spring of 1788, when the trial commenced, no important question, either of domestic or foreign policy, excited the public mind. The proceeding in Westminster Hall, therefore, naturally excited most of the attention of Parliament and of the public. It was the one great event of that season. But in the following year, the King's illness, the debates on the Regency, the expectation of a change of Ministry, completely diverted public attention from Indian affairs; and within a fortnight after George the Third had returned thanks in St. Paul's for his recovery, the States-General of France met at Versailles. In the midst of the agitation produced by those events, the impeachment was for a time almost forgotten.

The trial in the Hall went on languidly. In the session of 1788, when the proceedings had the interest of novelty, and when the Peers had little other business before them, only thirty-five days were given to the impeachment. In 1789, the Regency Bill occupied the Upper House till the session was far advanced. When the King recovered, the circuits were beginning. The judges left town; the Lords waited for the return of the oracles of jurisprudence; and the consequence was, that during the whole year only seventeen days were given to the case of Hastings. It was clear that the matter would be protracted to a length unprecedented in the annals of criminal law.

In truth, it is impossible to deny that impeachment, though it is a fine ceremony, and though it may have been useful in the seventeenth century, is not a proceeding from which much good can now be expected. Whatever confidence may be placed in the decisions of the Peers on an appeal arising out of ordinary litigation, it is certain that no man has the least confidence in their impartiality, when a great public functionary, charged with a great state crime, is brought to their bar. They are all politicians. There is hardly one among them, whose vote on an impeachment may not be confidently predicted before a witness has been examined; and even were it possible to rely on their justice, they would still be quite unfit to try such a cause as that of Hastings. They sit only during half the year. They have to transact much legislative and much judicial business. The law-lords, whose advice is required to guide the unlearned majority, are employed daily in administering justice elsewhere. It is impossible, therefore, that during a busy session, the Upper House should give more than a few days to an impeachment. To expect that their Lordships would give up partridge-shooting, in order to bring the greatest delinquent to speedy justice, or to relieve accused innocence by speedy acquittal, would be unreasonable indeed. A well constituted tribunal, sitting regularly six days in the week, and nine hours in the day, would have finished the trial of Hastings in less than three months. The Lords had not finished their work in seven years.

The result ceased to be matter of doubt, from the time when the Lords resolved that they would be guided by the rules of evidence which are received in the inferior courts of the realm. Those rules, it is well known, exclude much information which would be quite sufficient to determine the conduct of any reasonable man, in the most important transactions of private life. Those rules, at every assizes, save scores of culprits, whom judges, jury, and

spectators, firmly believe to be guilty. But when those rules were rigidly applied to offences committed many years before, at the distance of many thousand miles, conviction was, of course, out of the question. We do not blame the accused and his counsel for availing themselves of every legal advantage in order to obtain an acquittal. But it is clear that an acquittal so obtained cannot be pleaded in bar of the judgment of history.

Several attempts were made by the friends of Hastings to put a stop to the trial. In 1789 they proposed a vote of censure upon Burke, for some violent language which he had used respecting the death of Nuncomar, and the connection between Hastings and Impey. Burke was then unpopular in the last degree both with the house and with the country. The asperity and indecency of some expressions which he had used during the debates on the Regency, had annoyed even his warmest friends. The vote of censure was carried, and those who had moved it hoped that the managers would resign in disgust. Burke was deeply hurt. But his zeal for what he considered as the cause of justice and mercy triumphed over his personal feelings. He received the censure of the house with dignity and meekness, and declared that no personal mortification or humiliation should induce him to flinch from the sacred duty which he had undertaken.

In the following year, the Parliament was dissolved; and the friends of Hastings entertained a hope that the new House of Commons might not be disposed to go on with the impeachment. They began by maintaining that the whole proceeding was terminated by the dissolution. Defeated on this point, they made a direct motion that the impeachment should be dropped; but they were defeated by the combined forces of the government and the opposition. It was, however, resolved that, for the sake of expedition, many of the articles should be withdrawn. In truth, had

not some such measure been adopted, the trial would have lasted till the defendant was in his grave.

At length, in the spring of 1795, the decision was pronounced, nearly eight years after Hastings had been brought by the sergeant-at-arms of the Commons to the bar of the Lords. On the last day of this great procedure, the public curiosity, long suspended, seemed to be revived. Anxiety about the judgment there could be none; for it had been fully ascertained that there was a great majority for the defendant. But many wished to see the pageant, and the hall was as much crowded as on the first day. But those who, having been present on the first day, now bore a part in the proceedings of the last, were few, and most of those few were altered men.

As Hastings himself said, the arraignment had taken place before one generation, and the judgment was pronounced by another. The spectator could not look at the woolsack, or at the red benches of the Peers, or at the green benches of the Commons, without seeing something that reminded him of the instability of all human things;—of the instability of power and fame and life, of the more lamentable instability of friendship. The great seal was borne before Lord Loughborough, who, when the trial commenced, was a fierce opponent of Mr. Pitt's government, and who was now a member of that government; while Thurlow, who presided in the court when it first sat, estranged from all his old allies, sat scowling among the junior barons. Of a hundred and sixty nobles who walked in the procession on the first day, sixty had been laid in their family vaults. Still more affecting must have been the sight of the managers' box. What had become of that fair fellowship, so closely bound together by public and private ties, so resplendent with every talent and accomplishment? It had been scattered by calamities more bitter than the bitterness of death. The great chiefs were still living, and

still in the full vigour of their genius. But their friendship was at an end. It had been violently and publicly dissolved with tears and stormy reproaches. If those men, once so dear to each other, were now compelled to meet for the purpose of managing the impeachment, they met as strangers whom public business had brought together, and be haved to each other with cold and distant civility. Burke had in his vortex whirled away Windham. Fox had been followed by Sheridan and Grey.

Only twenty-nine Peers voted. Of these only six found Hastings guilty, on the charges relating to Cheyte Sing and to the Begums. On other charges the majority in his favour was still greater. On some, he was unanimously absolved. He was then called to the bar, informed from the woolsack that the Lords had acquitted him, and solemnly discharged. He bowed respectfully, and retired.

We have said that the decision had been fully expected. It was also generally approved. At the commencement of the trial there had been a strong and indeed unreasonable feeling against Hastings. At the close of the trial, there was a feeling equally strong and equally unreasonable in his favour. One cause of the change was, no doubt, what is commonly called the fickleness of the multitude, but what seems to us to be merely the general law of human nature. Both in individuals and in masses violent excitement is always followed by remission, and often by reaction. We are all inclined to depreciate whatever we have overpraised; and, on the other hand, to show undue indulgence where we have shown undue rigour. It was thus in the case of Hastings. The length of his trial, moreover, made him an object of compassion. It was thought, and not without reason, that, even if he was guilty, he was still an ill-used man, and that an impeachment of eight years was more than a sufficient punishment. It was also felt that, though in the ordinary course of criminal law, a de-

fendant is not allowed to set off his good actions against his crimes, a great political cause should be tried on different principles; and that a man who had governed a great country during thirteen years might have done some very reprehensible things, and yet might be on the whole deserving of rewards and honours rather than of fine and imprisonment. The Press, an instrument neglected by the prosecutors, was used by Hastings and his friends with great effect. Every ship, too, that arrived from Madras or Bengal brought a cuddy full of his admirers. Every gentleman from India spoke of the late Governor-General as having deserved better, and having been treated worse, than any man living. The effect of this testimony, unanimously given by all persons who knew the East, was naturally very great. Retired members of the Indian services, civil and military, were settled in all corners of the kingdom. Each of them was, of course, in his own little circle regarded as an oracle on an Indian question; and they were, with scarcely one exception, the zealous advocates of Hastings. It is to be added, that the numerous addresses to the late Governor-General, which his friends in Bengal obtained from the natives and transmitted to England, made a considerable impression. To these addresses we attach little or no importance. That Hastings was beloved by the people whom he governed is true; but the eulogies of pundits, zemindars, Mahommedan doctors, do not prove it to be true. For an English collector or judge would have found it easy to induce any native who could write, to sign a panegyric on the most odious ruler that ever was in India. It was said that at Benares, the very place at which the acts set forth in the first article of impeachment had been committed, the natives had erected a temple to Hastings; and this story excited a strong sensation in England. Burke's observations on the apotheosis were admirable. He saw no reason for astonishment, he said, in the incident which had been re-

presented as so striking. He knew something of the mythology of the Brahmins. He knew that, as they worshipped some gods from love, so they worshipped others from fear. He knew that they erected shrines, not only to the benignant deities of light and plenty, but also to the fiends who preside over smallpox and murder. Nor did he at all dispute the claim of Mr. Hastings to be admitted into such a Pantheon. This reply has always struck us as one of the finest that ever was made in Parliament. It is a grave and forcible argument, decorated by the most brilliant wit and fancy.

Hastings was, however, safe. But, in everything except character, he would have been far better off, if, when first impeached, he had at once pleaded guilty, and paid a fine of fifty thousand pounds. He was a ruined man. The legal expenses of his defence had been enormous. The expenses which did not appear in his attorney's bill were perhaps larger still. Great sums had been paid to Major Scott. Great sums had been laid out in bribing newspapers, rewarding pamphleteers, and circulating tracts. Burke, so early as 1790, declared in the House of Commons that twenty thousand pounds had been employed in corrupting the press. It is certain that no controversial weapon, from the gravest reasoning to the coarsest ribaldry, was left unemployed. Logan, in prose, defended the accused Governor with great ability. For the lovers of verse, the speeches of the managers were burlesqued in Simpkin's letters. It is, we are afraid, indisputable that Hastings stooped so low as to court the aid of that malignant and filthy baboon, John Williams, who called himself Anthony Pasquin. It was necessary to subsidise such allies largely. The private hoards of Mrs. Hastings had disappeared. It is said that the banker to whom they had been intrusted had failed. Still, if Hastings had practised strict economy, he would, after all his losses, have had a moderate compe-

tence; but in the management of his private affairs he was imprudent. The dearest wish of his heart had always been to regain Daylesford. At length, in the very year in which his trial commenced, the wish was accomplished; and the domain, alienated more than seventy years before, returned to the descendant of its old lords. But the manor-house was a ruin; and the grounds round it had, during many years, been utterly neglected. Hastings proceeded to build, to plant, to form a sheet of water, to excavate a grotto; and, before he was dismissed from the bar of the House of Lords, he had expended more than forty thousand pounds in adorning his seat.

The general feeling both of the directors and of the proprietors of the East India Company was, that he had great claims on them, that his services to them had been eminent, and that his misfortunes had been the effect of his zeal for their interests. His friends in Leadenhall Street, proposed to reimburse him for the costs of his trial, and to settle on him an annuity of five thousand pounds a year. But the consent of the Board of Control was required; and at the head of the Board of Control was Mr. Dundas, who had himself been a party to the impeachment, who had, on that account, been reviled with great bitterness by the partisans of Hastings, and who, therefore, was not in a very complying mood. He refused to consent to what the directors suggested. The directors remonstrated. A long controversy followed. Hastings, in the mean time, was reduced to such distress, that he could hardly pay his weekly bills. At length a compromise was made. An annuity of four thousand a year was settled on Hastings; and, in order to enable him to meet pressing demands, he was to receive ten years' annuity in advance. The Company was also permitted to lend him fifty thousand pounds, to be repaid by instalments, without interest. This relief, though given in the most absurd manner, was sufficient to enable

the retired governor to live in comfort, and even in luxury, if he had been a skilful manager. But he was careless and profuse, and was more than once under the necessity of applying to the Company for assistance, which was liberally given.

He had security and affluence, but not the power and dignity, which, when he landed from India, he had reason to expect. He had then looked forward to a coronet, a red riband, a seat at the Council Board, an office at Whitehall. He was then only fifty-two, and might hope for many years of bodily and mental vigour. The case was widely different when he left the bar of the Lords. He was now too old a man to turn his mind to a new class of studies and duties. He had no chance of receiving any mark of royal favour while Mr. Pitt remained in power; and, when Mr. Pitt retired, Hastings was approaching his seventieth year.

Once, and only once, after his acquittal, he interfered in politics, and that interference was not much to his honour. In 1804, he exerted himself strenuously to prevent Mr. Addington, against whom Fox and Pitt had combined, from resigning the Treasury. It is difficult to believe that a man so able and energetic as Hastings, can have thought that, when Bonaparte was at Boulogne with a great army, the defence of our island could safely be intrusted to a ministry which did not contain a single person whom flattery could describe as a great statesman. It is also certain that, on the important question which had raised Mr. Addington to power, and on which he differed from both Fox and Pitt, Hastings, as might have been expected, agreed with Fox and Pitt, and was decidedly opposed to Addington. Religious intolerance has never been the vice of the India service, and certainly was not the vice of Hastings. But Mr. Addington had treated him with marked favour. Fox had been a principal manager of the impeachment. To

Pitt it was owing that there had been an impeachment; and Hastings, we fear, was on this occasion guided by personal considerations, rather than by a regard to the public interest.

The last twenty-four years of his life were chiefly passed at Daylesford. He amused himself with embellishing his grounds, riding fine Arab horses, fattening prize-cattle, and trying to rear Indian animals and vegetables in England. He sent for seeds of a very fine custard-apple, from the garden of what had once been his own villa, among the green hedgerows of Allipore. He tried also to naturalise in Worcestershire the delicious leechee, almost the only fruit of Bengal, which deserves to be regretted even amidst the plenty of Covent-Garden. The Mogul emperors, in the time of their greatness, had in vain attempted to introduce into Hindostan the goat of the table-land of Thibet, whose down supplies the looms of Cashmere with the materials of the finest shawls. Hastings tried, with no better fortune, to rear a breed at Daylesford; nor does he seem to have succeeded better with the cattle of Bootan, whose tails are in high esteem as the best fans for brushing away the musquitoes.

Literature divided his attention with his conservatories and his menagerie. He had always loved books, and they were now necessary to him. Though not a poet, in any high sense of the word, he wrote neat and polished lines with great facility, and was fond of exercising this talent. Indeed, if we must speak out, he seems to have been more of a Trissotin than was to be expected from the powers of his mind, and from the great part which he had played in life. We are assured in these Memoirs, that the first thing which he did in the morning was to compose a copy of verses. When the family and guests assembled, the poem made its appearance as regularly as the eggs and rolls; and Mr. Gleig requires us to believe that, if from any accident Hastings came to the breakfast-table without one of

his charming performances in his hand, the omission was felt by all as a grievous disappointment. Tastes differ widely. For ourselves we must say that, however good the breakfasts at Daylesford may have been—and we are assured that the tea was of the most aromatic flavour, and that neither tongue nor venison-pasty was wanting—we should have thought the reckoning high, if we had been forced to earn our repast by listening every day to a new madrigal or sonnet composed by our host. We are glad, however, that Mr. Gleig has preserved this little feature of character, though we think it by no means a beauty. It is good to be often reminded of the inconsistency of human nature; and to learn to look without wonder or disgust on the weaknesses which are found in the strongest minds. Dionysius in old times, Frederic in the last century, with capacity and vigour equal to the conduct of the greatest affairs, united all the little vanities and affectations of provincial blue-stockings. These great examples may console the admirers of Hastings for the affliction of seeing him reduced to the level of the Hayleys and the Sewards.

When Hastings had passed many years in retirement, and had long outlived the common age of men, he again became for a short time an object of general attention. In 1813 the charter of the East India Company was renewed; and much discussion about Indian affairs took place in Parliament. It was determined to examine witnesses at the bar of the Commons, and Hastings was ordered to attend. He had appeared at that bar before. It was when he read his answer to the charges which Burke had laid on the table. Since that time twenty-seven years had elapsed; public feeling had undergone a complete change; the nation had now forgotten his faults, and remembered only his services. The reappearance, too, of a man who had been among the most distinguished of a generation that had passed away, who now belonged to history, and who

seemed to have risen from the dead, could not but produce a solemn and pathetic effect. The Commons received him with acclamations, ordered a chair to be set for him, and, when he retired, rose and uncovered. There were, indeed, a few who did not sympathise with the general feeling. One or two of the managers of the impeachment were present. They sate in the same seats which they had occupied when they had been thanked for the services which they had rendered in Westminster Hall; for, by the courtesy of the house, a member who has been thanked in his place, is considered as having a right always to occupy that place. These gentlemen were not disposed to admit that they had employed several of the best years of their lives in persecuting an innocent man. They accordingly kept their seats, and pulled their hats over their brows; but the exceptions only made the prevailing enthusiasm more remarkable. The Lords received the old man with similar tokens of respect. The University of Oxford conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Laws; and, in the Sheldonian theatre, the under-graduates welcomed him with tumultuous cheering.

These marks of public esteem were soon followed by marks of the favour of the crown. Hastings was sworn of the Privy Council, and was admitted to a long private audience of the Prince Regent, who treated him very graciously. When the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia visited England, Hastings appeared in their train both at Oxford and in the Guildhall of London; and, though surrounded by a crowd of princes and great warriors, was everywhere received by the public with marks of respect and admiration. He was presented by the Prince Regent both to Alexander and to Frederic William; and his Royal Highness went so far as to declare in public, that honours far higher than a seat in the Privy Council were due, and should soon be paid, to the man who had

saved the British dominions in Asia. Hastings now confidently expected a peerage; but, from some unexplained cause, he was again disappointed.

He lived about four years longer, in the enjoyment of good spirits, of faculties not impaired to any painful or degrading extent, and of health such as is rarely enjoyed by those who attain such an age. At length, on the 22d of August, 1818, in the eighty-sixth year of his age, he met death with the same tranquil and decorous fortitude which he had opposed to all the trials of his various and eventful life.

With all his faults—and they were neither few nor small—only one cemetery was worthy to contain his remains. In that temple of silence and reconciliation, where the enmities of twenty generations lie buried, in the Great Abbey which has for ages afforded a quiet resting-place to those whose minds and bodies have been shattered by the contentions of the Great Hall, the dust of the illustrious accused should have been mingled with the dust of the illustrious accusers. This was not to be. Yet the place of interment was not ill chosen. Behind the chancel of the parish-church of Daylesford, in earth which already held the bones of many chiefs of the house of Hastings, was laid the coffin of the greatest man who has ever borne that ancient and widely extended name. On that very spot probably, fourscore years before, the little Warren, meanly clad and scantily fed, had played with the children of ploughmen. Even then his young mind had revolved plans which might be called romantic. Yet, however romantic, it is not likely that they had been so strange as the truth. Not only had the poor orphan retrieved the fallen fortunes of his line. Not only had he repurchased the old lands, and rebuilt the old dwelling. He had preserved and extended an empire. He had founded a polity. He had administered government and war with more than the ca-

pacity of Richelieu; and had patronised learning with the judicious liberality of Cosmo. He had been attacked by the most formidable combination of enemies that ever sought the destruction of a single victim; and over that combination, after a struggle of ten years, he had triumphed. He had at length gone down to his grave in the fulness of age—in peace, after so many troubles; in honour, after so much obloquy.

Those who look on his character without favour or malevolence, will pronounce that, in the two great elements of all social virtue—in respect for the rights of others, and in sympathy for the sufferings of others—he was deficient. His principles were somewhat lax. His heart was somewhat hard. But while we cannot with truth describe him either as a righteous or as a merciful ruler, we cannot regard without admiration the amplitude and fertility of his intellect—his rare talents for command, for administration and for controversy—his dauntless courage—his honourable poverty—his fervent zeal for the interests of the state—his noble equanimity, tried by both extremes of fortune, and never disturbed by either.

FREDERIC THE GREAT.*

[Edinburgh Review, April, 1842.]

This work, which has the high honour of being introduced to the world by the author of "Lochiel" and "Hohenlinden," is not wholly unworthy of so distinguished a *chaperon*. It professes, indeed, to be no more than a compilation; but it is an exceedingly amusing compilation, and we shall be glad to have more of it. The narrative comes down at present only to the commencement of the Seven Years' War, and therefore does not comprise the most interesting portion of Frederic's reign.

It may not be unacceptable to our readers that we should take this opportunity of presenting them with a slight sketch of the life of the greatest king that has, in modern times, succeeded by right of birth to a throne. It may, we fear, be impossible to compress so long and eventful a story within the limits which we must prescribe to ourselves. Should we be compelled to break off, we shall, when the continuation of this work appears, return to the subject.

The Prussian monarchy, the youngest of the great European states, but in population and in revenue the fifth amongst them, and in art, science, and civilisation entitled to the third, if not to the second place, sprang from an humble origin. About the beginning of the fifteenth century, the

* *Frederic the Great and his Times.* Edited, with an Introduction, by Thomas Campbell, Esq. 2 vols. 8vo. London: 1842.

marquisate of Brandenburg was bestowed by the Emperor Sigismund on the noble family of Hohenzollern. In the sixteenth century that family embraced the Lutheran doctrines. Early in the seventeenth century it obtained from the king of Poland the investiture of the duchy of Prussia. Even after this accession of territory, the chiefs of the house of Hohenzollern hardly ranked with the electors of Saxony and Bavaria. The soil of Brandenburg was for the most part sterile. Even round Berlin, the capital of the province, and round Potsdam, the favourite residence of the Margraves, the country was a desert. In some tracts, the deep sand could with difficulty be forced by assiduous tillage to yield thin crops of rye and oats. In other places, the ancient forests, from which the conquerors of the Roman empire had descended on the Danube, remained untouched by the hand of man. Where the soil was rich it was generally marshy, and its insalubrity repelled the cultivators whom its fertility attracted. Frederic William, called the Great Elector, was the prince to whose policy his successors have agreed to ascribe their greatness. He acquired by the peace of Westphalia several valuable possessions, and among them the rich city and district of Magdeburg; and he left to his son Frederic a principality as considerable as any which was not called a kingdom.

Frederic aspired to the style of royalty. Ostentatious and profuse, negligent of his true interests and of his high duties, insatiably eager for frivolous distinctions, he added nothing to the real weight of the state which he governed: perhaps he transmitted his inheritance to his children impaired rather than augmented in value, but he succeeded in gaining the great object of his life, the title of king. In the year 1700 he assumed this new dignity. He had on that occasion to undergo all the mortifications which fall to the lot of ambitious upstarts. Compared with the other crowned heads of Europe, he made a figure resembling

that which a Nabob or a Commissary, who had bought a title, would make in the company of Peers whose ancestors had been attainted for treason against the Plantagenets.

The envy of the class which he quitted, and the civil scorn of the class into which he intruded himself, were marked in very significant ways. The elector of Saxony at first refused to acknowledge the new Majesty. Louis the Fourteenth looked down on his brother King with an air not unlike that with which the Count in Molière's play regards Monsieur Jourdain, just fresh from the mummery of being made a gentleman. Austria exacted large sacrifices in return for her recognition, and at last gave it ungraciously.

Frederic was succeeded by his son, Frederic William, a prince who must be allowed to have possessed some talents for administration, but whose character was disfigured by the most odious vices, and whose eccentricities were such as had never been seen out of a madhouse. He was exact and diligent in the transaction of business, and he was the first who formed the design of obtaining for Prussia a place among the European powers, altogether out of proportion to her extent and population, by means of a strong military organisation. Strict economy enabled him to keep up a peace establishment of sixty thousand troops. These troops were disciplined in such a manner, that placed beside them, the household regiments of Versailles and St. James's would have appeared an awkward squad. The master of such a force could not but be regarded by all his neighbours as a formidable enemy, and a valuable ally.

But the mind of Frederic William was so ill regulated, that all his inclinations became passions, and all his passions partook of the character of moral and intellectual disease. His parsimony degenerated into sordid avarice. His taste for military pomp and order became a mania, like that of a Dutch burgomaster for tulips; or that of a

member of the Roxburgh club for Caxtons. While the envoys of the Court of Berlin were in a state of such squalid poverty as moved the laughter of foreign capitals; while the food placed before the princes and the princesses of the blood-royal of Prussia was too scanty to appease hunger, and so bad that even hunger loathed it—no price was thought too extravagant for tall recruits. The ambition of the king was to form a brigade of giants, and every country was ransacked by his agents for men above the ordinary stature. These researches were not confined to Europe. No head that towered above the crowd in the bazaars of Aleppo, of Cairo, or of Surat, could escape the crimps of Frederic William. One Irishman more than seven feet high, who was picked up in London by the Prussian ambassador, received a bounty of near £1300 sterling—very much more than the ambassador's salary. This extravagance was the more absurd, because a stout youth of five feet eight, who might have been procured for a few dollars, would in all probability have been a much more valuable soldier. But to Frederic William, this huge Irishman was what a brass Otho, or a Vinegar Bible, is to a collector of a different kind.

It is remarkable, that though the main end of Frederic William's administration was to have a great military force, though his reign forms an important epoch in the history of military discipline, and though his dominant passion was the love of military display, he was yet one of the most pacific of princes. We are afraid that his aversion to war was not the effect of humanity, but was merely one of his thousand whims. His feeling about his troops seems to have resembled a miser's feeling about his money. He loved to collect them, to count them, to see them increase; but he could not find it in his heart to break in upon the precious hoard. He looked forward to some future time when his Patagonian battalions were to drive hostile in-

fantry before them like sheep. But this future time was always receding; and it is probable that, if his life had been prolonged thirty years, his superb army would never have seen any harder service than a sham fight in the fields near Berlin. But the great military means which he had collected, were destined to be employed by a spirit far more daring and inventive than his own.

Frederic, surnamed the Great, son of Frederick William, was born in January, 1712. It may safely be pronounced that he had received from nature a strong and sharp understanding, and a rare firmness of temper and intensity of will. As to the other parts of his character, it is difficult to say whether they are to be ascribed to nature, or to the strange training which he underwent. The history of his boyhood is painfully interesting. Oliver Twist in the parish workhouse, Smike at Dotheboys Hall, were petted children when compared with this wretched heir-apparent of a crown. The nature of Frederic William was hard and bad, and the habit of exercising arbitrary power had made him frightfully savage. His rage constantly vented itself to right and left in curses and blows. When his majesty took a walk, every human being fled before him, as if a tiger had broken loose from a menagerie. If he met a lady in the street, he gave her a kick, and told her to go home and mind her brats. If he saw a clergyman staring at the soldiers, he admonished the reverend gentleman to betake himself to study and prayer, and enforced this pious advice by a sound caning, administered on the spot. But it was in his own house that he was most unreasonable and ferocious. His palace was hell, and he the most execrable of fiends—a cross between Moloch and Puck. His son Frederic and his daughter Wilhelmina, afterwards Margravine of Bareuth, were in an especial manner objects of his aversion. His own mind was uncultivated. He despised literature. He hated infidels, papists,

and metaphysicians, and did not very well understand in what they differed from each other. The business of life, according to him, was to drill and to be drilled. The recreations suited to a prince, were to sit in a cloud of tobacco-smoke, to sip Swedish beer between the puffs of the pipe, to play backgammon for three-halfpence a rubber, to kill wild hogs, and to shoot partridges by the thousand. The Prince-Royal showed little inclination either for the serious employments or for the amusements of his father. He shirked the duties of the parade—he detested the fume of tobacco—he had no taste either for backgammon or for field-sports. He had received from nature an exquisite ear, and performed skilfully on the flute. His earliest instructors had been French refugees, and they had awakened in him a strong passion for French literature and French society. Frederic William regarded these tastes as effeminate and contemptible, and, by abuse and persecution, made them still stronger. Things became worse when the Prince-Royal attained that time of life at which the great revolution in the human mind and body takes place. He was guilty of some youthful indiscretions, which no good and wise parent would regard with severity. At a later period he was accused, truly or falsely, of vices, from which History averts her eyes, and which even Satire blushes to name—vices such that, to borrow the energetic language of Lord-Keeper Coventry, "the depraved nature of man, which of itself carrieth man to all other sin, abhorreth them." But the offences of his youth were not characterised by any peculiar turpitude. They excited, however, transports of rage in the King, who hated all faults except those to which he was himself inclined; and who conceived that he made ample atonement to heaven for his brutality, by holding the softer passions in detestation. The Prince-Royal, too, was not one of those who are content to take their religion on trust. He asked puz-

zling questions, and brought forward arguments which seemed to savour of something different from pure Lutheranism. The King suspected that his son was inclined to be a heretic of some sort or other, whether Calvinist or Atheist his majesty did not very well know. The ordinary malignity of Frederic William was bad enough. He now thought malignity a part of his duty as a Christian man, and all the conscience that he had stimulated his hatred. The flute was broken—the French books were sent out of the palace—the prince was kicked, and cudgelled, and pulled by the hair. At dinner the plates were hurled at his head—sometimes he was restricted to bread and water—sometimes he was forced to swallow food so nauseous, that he could not keep it on his stomach. Once his father knocked him down, dragged him along the floor to a window, and was with difficulty prevented from strangling him with the cord of the curtain. The queen, for the crime of not wishing to see her son murdered, was subjected to the grossest indignities. The Princess Wilhelmina, who took her brother's part, was treated almost as ill as Mrs. Brownrigg's apprentices. Driven to despair, the unhappy youth tried to run away; then the fury of the old tyrant rose to madness. The prince was an officer in the army; his flight was therefore desertion, and, in the moral code of Frederic William, desertion was the highest of all crimes. "Desertion," says this royal theologian, in one of his half-crazy letters, "is from hell. It is a work of the children of the devil. No child of God could possibly be guilty of it." An accomplice of the prince, in spite of the recommendation of a court-martial, was mercilessly put to death. It seemed probable that the prince himself would suffer the same fate. It was with difficulty that the intercession of the States of Holland, of the Kings of Sweden and Poland, and of the Emperor of Germany, saved the House of Brandenburg from the stain of an unnatural murder. After

months of cruel suspense, Frederic learned that his life would be spared. He remained, however, long a prisoner; but he was not on that accont to be pitied. He found in his jailers a tenderness which he had never found in his father; his table was not sumptuous, but he had wholesome food in sufficient quantity to appease hunger; he could read the *Henriade* without being kicked, and play on his flute without having it broken over his head.

When his confinement terminated, he was a man. He had nearly completed his twenty-first year, and could scarcely, even by such a parent as Frederic William, be kept much longer under the restraints which had made his boyhood miserable. Suffering had matured his understanding, while it had hardened his heart and soured his temper. He had learnt self-command and dissimulation; he affected to conform to some of his father's views, and submissively accepted a wife, who was a wife only in name, from his father's hand. He also served with credit, though without any opportunity of acquiring brilliant distinction, under the command of Prince Eugene, during a campaign marked by no extraordinary events. He was now permitted to keep a separate establishment, and was therefore able to indulge with caution his own tastes. Partly in order to conciliate the king, and partly, no doubt, from inclination, he gave up a portion of his time to military and political business, and thus gradually acquired such an aptitude for affairs as his most intimate associates were not aware that he possessed.

His favourite abode was at Rheinsberg, near the frontier which separates the Prussian dominions from the duchy of Mecklenburg. Rheinsberg is a fertile and smiling spot, in the midst of the sandy waste of the Marquisate. The mansion, surrounded by woods of oak and beech, looks out upon a spacious lake. There Frederic amused himself by laying out gardens in regular alleys and intricate mazes,

by building obelisks, temples, and conservatories, and by collecting rare fruits and flowers. His retirement was enlivened by a few companions, among whom he seems to have preferred those who, by birth or extraction, were French. With these inmates he dined and supped well, drank freely, and amused himself sometimes with concerts, sometimes with holding chapters of a fraternity which he called the Order of Bayard; but literature was his chief resource.

His education had been entirely French. The long ascendency which Louis XIV. had enjoyed, and the eminent merit of the tragic and comic dramatists, of the satirists, and of the preachers who had flourished under that magnificent prince, had made the French language predominant in Europe. Even in countries which had a national literature, and which could boast of names greater than those of Racine, of Molière, and of Massillon—in the country of Dante, in the country of Cervantes, in the country of Shakspeare and Milton—the intellectual fashions of Paris had been to a great extent adopted. Germany had not yet produced a single masterpiece of poetry or eloquence. In Germany, therefore, the French taste reigned without rival and without limit. Every youth of rank was taught to speak and write French. That he should speak and write his own tongue with politeness, or even with accuracy and facility, was regarded as comparatively an unimportant object. Even Frederic William, with all his rugged Saxon prejudices, thought it necessary that his children should know French, and quite unnecessary that they should be well versed in German. The Latin was positively interdicted. "My son," his majesty wrote, "shall not learn Latin; and, more than that, I will not suffer anybody even to mention such a thing to me." One of the preceptors ventured to read the Golden Bull in the original

with the Prince-Royal. Frederic William entered the room, and broke out in his usual kingly style.

"Rascal, what are you at there?"

"Please your majesty," answered the preceptor, "I was explaining the Golden Bull to his royal highness."

"I'll Golden Bull you, you rascal!" roared the majesty of Prussia. Up went the King's cane, away ran the terrified instructor, and Frederic's classical studies ended for ever. He now and then affected to quote Latin sentences, and produced such exquisite Ciceronian phrases as these: —"Stante pede morire,"—"De gustibus non est disputandus,"—"Tot verbas tot spondera." Of Italian, he had not enough to read a page of Metastasio with ease; and of the Spanish and English, he did not, as far as we are aware, understand a single word.

As the highest human compositions to which he had access were those of the French writers, it is not strange that his admiration for those writers should have been unbounded. His ambitious and eager temper early prompted him to imitate what he admired. The wish, perhaps, dearest to his heart was, that he might rank among the masters of French rhetoric and poetry. He wrote prose and verse as indefatigably as if he had been a starving hack of Cave or Osborn; but Nature, which had bestowed on him, in a large measure, the talents of a captain and of an administrator, had withheld from him those higher and rarer gifts, without which industry labours in vain to produce immortal eloquence or song. And, indeed, had he been blessed with more imagination, wit, and fertility of thought, than he appears to have had, he would still have been subject to one great disadvantage, which would, in all probability, have for ever prevented him from taking a high place among men of letters. He had not the full command of any language. There was no machine of thought which he could employ with perfect ease, confidence, and free-

dom. He had German enough to scold his servants, or to give the word of command to his grenadiers; but his grammar and pronunciation were extremely bad. He found it difficult to make out the meaning even of the simplest German poetry. On one occasion a version of Racine's *Iphigénie* was read to him. He held the French original in his hand; but was forced to own that, even with such help, he could not understand the translation. Yet though he had neglected his mother tongue in order to bestow all his attention on French, his French was, after all, the French of a foreigner. It was necessary for him to have always at his beck some men of letters from Paris to point out the solecisms and false rhymes, of which, to the last, he was frequently guilty. Even had he possessed the poetic faculty—of which, as far as we can judge, he was utterly destitute—the want of a language would have prevented him from being a great poet. No noble work of imagination, as far as we recollect, was ever composed by any man, except in a dialect which he had learned without remembering how or when; and which he had spoken with perfect ease before he had ever analysed its structure. Romans of great talents wrote Greek verses; but how many of those verses have deserved to live? Many men of eminent genius have, in modern times, written Latin poems; but, as far as we are aware, none of those poems, not even Milton's, can be ranked in the first class of art, or even very high in the second. It is not strange, therefore, that in the French verses of Frederic, we can find nothing beyond the reach of any man of good parts and industry—nothing above the level of Newdigate and Seatonian poetry. His best pieces may perhaps rank with the worst in Dodsley's collection. In history, he succeeded better. We do not, indeed, find in any part of his voluminous Memoirs, either deep reflection or vivid painting. But the narrative is distinguished by clearness, conciseness, good sense, and

a certain air of truth and simplicity, which is singularly graceful in a man who, having done great things, sits down to relate them. On the whole, however, none of his writings are so agreeable to us as his Letters; particularly those which are written with earnestness, and are not embroidered with verses.

It is not strange that a young man devoted to literature, and acquainted only with the literature of France, should have looked with profound veneration on the genius of Voltaire. Nor is it just to condemn him for this feeling. "A man who has never seen the sun," says Calderon in one of his charming comedies, "cannot be blamed for thinking that no glory can exceed that of the moon. A man who has seen neither moon nor sun, cannot be blamed for talking of the unrivalled brightness of the morning star." Had Frederic been able to read Homer and Milton, or even Virgil and Tasso, his admiration of the *Henriade* would prove that he was utterly destitute of the power of discerning what is excellent in art. Had he been familiar with Sophocles or Shakspeare, we should have expected him to appreciate *Zaire* more justly. Had he been able to study Thucydides and Tacitus in the original Greek and Latin, he would have known that there were heights in the eloquence of history far beyond the reach of the author of the *Life of Charles the Twelfth*. But the finest heroic poem, several of the most powerful tragedies, and the most brilliant and picturesque historical work that Frederic had ever read, were Voltaire's. Such high and various excellence moved the young prince almost to adoration. The opinions of Voltaire on religious and philosophical questions had not yet been fully exhibited to the public. At a later period, when an exile from his country, and at open war with the Church, he spoke out. But when Frederic was at Rheinsberg, Voltaire was still a courtier; and, though he could not always curb his petulant wit, he had as yet published

nothing that could exclude him from Versailles, and little that a divine of the mild and generous school of Grotius and Tillotson might not read with pleasure. In the *Henriade*, in *Zaire*, and in *Alzire*, Christian piety is exhibited in the most amiable form; and, some years after the period of which we are writing, a Pope condescended to accept the dedication of *Mahomet*. The real sentiments of the poet, however, might be clearly perceived by a keen eye through the decent disguise with which he veiled them, and could not escape the sagacity of Frederic, who held similar opinions, and had been accustomed to practise similar dissimulation.

The prince wrote to his idol in the style of a worshipper; and Voltaire replied with exquisite grace and address. A correspondence followed, which may be studied with advantage by those who wish to become proficients in the ignoble art of flattery. No man ever paid compliments better than Voltaire. His sweetened confectionary had always a delicate, yet stimulating flavour, which was delightful to palates wearied by the coarse preparations of inferior artists. It was only from his hand that so much sugar could be swallowed without making the swallower sick. Copies of verses, writing-desks, trinkets of amber, were exchanged between the friends. Frederic confided his writings to Voltaire; and Voltaire applauded, as if Frederic had been Racine and Bossuet in one. One of his royal highness's performances was a refutation of the *Principe* of Machiavelli. Voltaire undertook to convey it to the press. It was entitled the *Anti-Machiavel*, and was an edifying homily against rapacity, perfidy, arbitrary government, unjust war—in short, against almost everything for which its author is now remembered among men.

The old King uttered now and then a ferocious growl at the diversions of Rheinsberg. But his health was broken; his end was approaching; and his vigour was impaired.

He had only one pleasure left—that of seeing tall soldiers. He could always be propitiated by a present of a grenadier of six feet eight or six feet nine; and such presents were from time to time judiciously offered by his son.

Early in the year 1740, Frederic William met death with a firmness and dignity worthy of a better and wiser man; and Frederic, who had just completed his twenty-eighth year, became King of Prussia. His character was little understood. That he had good abilities, indeed, no person who had talked with him, or corresponded with him, could doubt. But the easy Epicurean life which he had led, his love of good cookery and good wine, of music, of conversation, of light literature, led many to regard him as a sensual and intellectual voluptuary. His habit of canting about moderation, peace, liberty and the happiness which a good mind derives from the happiness of others, had imposed on some who should have known better. Those who thought best of him, expected a Telemachus after Fénélon's pattern. Others predicted the approach of a Medicean age—an age propitious to learning and art, and not unpropitious to pleasure. Nobody had the least suspicion that a tyrant of extraordinary military and political talents, of industry more extraordinary still, without fear, without faith, and without mercy, had ascended the throne.

The disappointment of Falstaff at his old boon-companion's coronation, was not more bitter than that which awaited some of the inmates of Rheinsberg. They had long looked forward to the accession of their patron, as to the day from which their own prosperity and greatness was to date. They had at last reached the promised land, the land which they had figured to themselves as flowing with milk and honey; and they found it a desert. "No more of these fooleries," was the short, sharp admonition given by Frederic to one of them. It soon became plain that, in the most important points, the new sovereign bore a strong

family likeness to his predecessor. There was a wide difference between the father and the son as respected extent and vigour of intellect, speculative opinions, amusements, studies, outward demeanour. But the groundwork of the character was the same in both. To both were common the love of order, the love of business, the military taste, the parsimony, the imperious spirit, the temper irritable even to ferocity, the pleasure in the pain and humiliation of others. But these propensities had in Frederic William partaken of the general unsoundness of his mind, and wore a very different aspect when found in company with the strong and cultivated understanding of his successor. Thus, for example, Frederic was as anxious as any prince could be about the efficacy of his army. But this anxiety never degenerated into a monomania, like that which led his father to pay fancy-prices for giants. Frederic was as thrifty about money as any prince or any private man ought to be. But he did not conceive, like his father, that it was worth while to eat unwholesome cabbages for the sake of saving four or five rix-dollars in the year. Frederic was, we fear, as malevolent as his father; but Frederic's wit enabled him often to show his malevolence in ways more decent than those to which his father resorted, and to inflict misery and degradation by a taunt instead of a blow. Frederic, it is true, by no means relinquished his hereditary privilege of kicking and cudgelling. His practice, however, as to that matter, differed in some important respects from his father's. To Frederic William, the mere circumstance that any persons whatever, men, women, or children, Prussians or foreigners, were within reach of his toes and of his cane, appeared to be a sufficient reason for proceeding to belabour them. Frederic required provocation as well as vicinity; nor was he ever known to inflict this paternal species of correction on any but his born subjects; though on one occasion M. Thiébault had reason,

during a few seconds, to anticipate the high honour of being an exception to this general rule.

The character of Frederic was still very imperfectly understood either by his subjects or by his neighbours, when events occurred which exhibited it in a strong light. A few months after his accession died Charles VI., Emperor of Germany, the last descendant, in the male line, of the house of Austria.

Charles left no son, and had, long before his death, relinquished all hopes of male issue. During the latter part of his life, his principal object had been to secure to his descendants in the female line the many crowns of the house of Hapsburg. With this view, he had promulgated a new law of succession, widely celebrated throughout Europe under the name of the "Pragmatic Sanction." By virtue of this decree, his daughter, the Arch-duchess Maria Theresa, wife of Francis of Lorraine, succeeded to the dominions of her ancestors.

No sovereign has ever taken possession of a throne by a clearer title. All the politics of the Austrian cabinet had, during twenty years, been directed to one single end—the settlement of the succession. From every person whose rights could be considered as injuriously affected, renunciations in the most solemn form had been obtained. The new law had been ratified by the Estates of all the kingdoms and principalities which made up the great Austrian monarchy. England, France, Spain, Russia, Poland, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, the Germanic body, had bound themselves by treaty to maintain the "Pragmatic Sanction." That Instrument was placed under the protection of the public faith of the whole civilised world.

Even if no positive stipulations on this subject had existed, the arrangement was one which no good man would have been willing to disturb. It was a peaceable arrangement. It was an arrangement acceptable to the great popu-

lation whose happiness was chiefly concerned. It was an arrangement which made no change in the distribution of power among the states of Christendom. It was an arrangement which could be set aside only by means of a general war; and, if it were set aside, the effect would be, that the equilibrium of Europe would be deranged, that the loyal and patriotic feelings of millions would be cruelly outraged, and that great provinces which had been united for centuries would be torn from each other by main force.

The sovereigns of Europe were, therefore, bound by every obligation which those who are intrusted with power over their fellow-creatures ought to hold most sacred, to respect and defend the rights of the Archduchess. Her situation and her personal qualities were such as might be expected to move the mind of any generous man to pity, admiration, and chivalrous tenderness. She was in her twenty-fourth year. Her form was majestic, her features beautiful, her countenance sweet and animated, her voice musical, her deportment gracious and dignified. In all domestic relations she was without reproach. She was married to a husband whom she loved, and was on the point of giving birth to a child when death deprived her of her father. The loss of a parent, and the new cares of empire, were too much for her in the delicate state of her health. Her spirits were depressed, and her cheek lost its bloom.

Yet it seemed that she had little cause for anxiety. It seemed that justice, humanity, and the faith of treaties would have their due weight, and that the settlement so solemnly guaranteed would be quietly carried into effect. England, Russia, Poland, and Holland, declared in form their intention to adhere to their engagements. The French ministers made a verbal declaration to the same effect. But from no quarter did the young Queen of Hungary receive

stronger assurances of friendship and support than from the King of Prussia.

Yet the King of Prussia, the "Anti-Machiavel," had already full determined to commit the great crime of violating his plighted faith, of robbing the ally whom he was bound to defend, and of plunging all Europe into a long, bloody, and desolating war; and all this for no end whatever, except that he might extend his dominions, and see his name in the gazettes. He determined to assemble a great army with speed and secrecy, to invade Silesia before Maria Theresa should be apprised of his design, and to add that rich province to his kingdom.

We will not condescend to refute at length the pleas which the compiler of the Memoirs before us has copied from Doctor Preuss. They amount to this—that the house of Brandenburg had some ancient pretensions to Silesia, and had in the previous century been compelled, by hard usage on the part of the Court of Vienna, to waive those pretensions. It is certain that, whoever might originally have been in the right, Prussia had submitted. Prince after prince of the house of Brandenburg had acquiesced in the existing arrangement. Nay, the Court of Berlin had recently been allied with that of Vienna, and had guaranteed the integrity of the Austrian states. Is it not perfectly clear, that if antiquated claims are to be set up against recent treaties and long possession, the world can never be at peace for a day? The laws of all nations have wisely established a time of limitation, after which titles, however illegitimate in their origin, cannot be questioned. It is felt by everybody, that to eject a person from his estate on the ground of some injustice committed in the time of the Tudors, would produce all the evils which result from arbitrary confiscation, and would make all property insecure. It concerns the commonwealth—so runs the legal maxim—that there be an end of litigation. And surely this maxim is at least

equally applicable to the great commonwealth of states, for in that commonwealth litigation means the devastation of provinces, the suspension of trade and industry, sieges like those of Badajoz and St. Sebastian, pitched fields like those of Eylau and Borodino. We hold that the transfer of Norway from Denmark to Sweden was an unjustifiable proceeding; but would the king of Denmark be therefore justified in landing, without any new provocation, in Norway, and commencing military operations there? The king of Holland thinks, no doubt, that he was unjustly deprived of the Belgian provinces. Grant that it were so. Would he, therefore, be justified in marching with an army on Brussels? The case against Frederic was still stronger, inasmuch as the injustice of which he complained had been committed more than a century before. Nor must it be forgotten that he owed the highest personal obligations to the house of Austria. It may be doubted whether his life had not been preserved by the intercession of the prince whose daughter he was about to plunder.

To do the King justice, he pretended to no more virtue than he had. In Manifestoes he might, for form's sake, insert some idle stories about his antiquated claim on Silesia; but in his conversations and Memoirs he took a very different tone. To quote his own words:—"Ambition, interest, the desire of making people talk about me, carried the day; and I decided for war."

Having resolved on his course, he acted with ability and vigour. It was impossible wholly to conceal his preparations; for throughout the Prussian territories regiments, guns, and baggage, were in motion. The Austrian envoy at Berlin apprised his court of these facts, and expressed a suspicion of Frederic's designs; but the ministers of Maria Theresa refused to give credit to so black an imputation on a young prince who was known chiefly by his high pro-

fessions of integrity and philanthropy. "We will not," —they wrote—"we cannot believe it."

In the mean time the Prussian forces had been assembled. Without any declaration of war, without any demand for reparation, in the very act of pouring forth compliments and assurances of good-will, Frederic commenced hostilities. Many thousands of his troops were actually in Silesia before the Queen of Hungary knew that he had set up any claim to any part of her territories. At length he sent her a message which could be regarded only as an insult. If she would but let him have Silesia, he would, he said, stand by her against any power which should try to deprive her of her other dominions: as if he was not already bound to stand by her, or as if his new promise could be of more value than the old one!

It was the depth of winter. The cold was severe, and the roads deep in mire. But the Prussians passed on. Resistance was impossible. The Austrian army was then neither numerous nor efficient. The small portion of that army which lay in Silesia, was unprepared for hostilities. Glogau was blockaded; Breslau opened its gates: Ohlau was evacuated. A few scattered garrisons still held out; but the whole open country was subjugated: no enemy ventured to encounter the king in the field; and, before the end of January, 1741, he returned to receive the congratulations of his subjects at Berlin.

Had the Silesian question been merely a question between Frederic and Maria Theresa, it would be impossible to acquit the Prussian king of gross perfidy. But when we consider the effects which his policy produced, and could not fail to produce, on the whole community of civilised nations, we are compelled to pronounce a condemnation still more severe. Till he began the war, it seemed possible, even probable, that the peace of the world would be preserved. The plunder of the great Austrian heritage

was indeed a strong temptation; and in more than one cabinet ambitious schemes were already meditated. But the treaties by which the "Pragmatic Sanction" had been guaranteed, were express and recent. To throw all Europe into confusion for a purpose clearly unjust, was no light matter. England was true to her engagements. The voice of Fleury had always been for peace. He had a conscience. He was now in extreme old age, and was unwilling, after a life which, when his situation was considered, must be pronounced singularly pure, to carry the fresh stain of a great crime before the tribunal of his God. Even the vain and unprincipled Belle-Isle, whose whole life was one wild daydream of conquest and spoliation, felt that France, bound as she was by solemn stipulations, could not, without disgrace, make a direct attack on the Austrian dominions. Charles, Elector of Bavaria, pretended that he had a right to a large part of the inheritance which the "Pragmatic Sanction" gave to the Queen of Hungary; but he was not sufficiently powerful to move without support. It might, therefore, not unreasonably be expected, that after a short period of restlessness, all the potentates of Christendom would acquiesce in the arrangements made by the late Emperor. But the selfish rapacity of the King of Prussia gave the signal to his neighbours. His example quieted their sense of shame. His success led them to underrate the difficulty of dismembering the Austrian monarchy. The whole world sprang to arms. On the head of Frederic is all the blood which was shed in a war which raged during many years and in every quarter of the globe—the blood of the column of Fontenoy, the blood of the brave mountaineers who were slaughtered at Culloden. The evils produced by this wickedness were felt in lands where the name of Prussia was unknown; and, in order that he might rob a neighbour whom he had promised to defend,

black men fought on the coast of Coromandel, and red men scalped each other by the Great Lakes of North America.

Silesia had been occupied without a battle; but the Austrian troops were advancing to the relief of the fortresses which still held out. In the spring Frederic rejoined his army. He had seen little of war, and had never commanded any great body of men in the field. It is not, therefore, strange that his first military operations showed little of that skill which, at a later period, was the admiration of Europe. What connoisseurs say of some pictures painted by Raphael in his youth, may be said of this campaign. It was in Frederic's early bad manner. Fortunately for him, the generals to whom he was opposed were men of small capacity. The discipline of his own troops, particularly of the infantry, was unequalled in that age; and some able and experienced officers were at hand to assist him with their advice. Of these, the most distinguished was Field-Marshal Schwerin—a brave adventurer of Pomeranian extraction, who had served half the governments in Europe, had borne the commissions of the States-General of Holland and of the Duke of Mecklenburg, and fought under Marlborough at Blenheim, and had been with Charles the Twelfth at Bender.

Frederic's first battle was fought at Molwitz; and never did the career of a great commander open in a more inauspicious manner. His army was victorious. Not only, however, did he not establish his title to the character of an able general, but he was so unfortunate as to make it doubtful whether he possessed the vulgar courage of a soldier. The cavalry, which he commanded in person, was put to flight. Unaccustomed to the tumult and carnage of a field of battle, he lost his self-possession, and listened too readily to those who urged him to save himself. His English grey carried him many miles from the field, while Schwerin, though wounded in two places, manfully upheld

the day. The skill of the old Field-Marshal and the steadiness of the Prussian battalions prevailed; and the Austrian army was driven from the field with the loss of eight thousand men.

The news was carried late at night to a mill in which the king had taken shelter. It gave him a bitter pang. He was successful; but he owed his success to dispositions which others had made, and to the valour of men who had fought while he was flying. So unpromising was the first appearance of the greatest warrior of that age!

The battle of Molwitz was the signal for a general explosion throughout Europe. Bavaria took up arms. France, not yet declaring herself a principal in the war, took part in it as an ally of Bavaria. The two great statesmen to whom mankind had owed many years of tranquillity, disappeared about this time from the scene; but not till they had both been guilty of the weakness of sacrificing their sense of justice and their love of peace in the vain hope of preserving their power. Fleury, sinking under age and infirmity, was borne down by the impetuosity of Belle-Isle. Walpole retired from the service of his ungrateful country to his woods and paintings at Houghton; and his power devolved on the daring and eccentric Carteret. As were the ministers, so were the nations. Thirty years during which Europe had, with few interruptions, enjoyed repose, had prepared the public mind for great military efforts. A new generation had grown up, which could not remember the siege of Turin or the slaughter of Malplaquet; which knew war by nothing but its trophies; and which, while it looked with pride on the tapestries at Blenheim, or the statue in the "Place of Victories," little thought by what privations, by what waste of private fortunes, by how many bitter tears, conquests must be purchased.

For a time fortune seemed adverse to the Queen of Hungary. Frederic invaded Moravia. The French and Bava-

rians penetrated into Bohemia, and were there joined by the Saxons. Prague was taken. The Elector of Bavaria was raised by the suffrages of his colleagues to the Imperial throne—a throne which the practice of centuries had almost entitled the House of Austria to regard as a hereditary possession.

Yet was the spirit of the haughty daughter of the Cæsars unbroken. Hungary was still hers by an unquestionable title; and although her ancestors had found Hungary the most mutinous of all their kingdoms, she resolved to trust herself to the fidelity of a people, rude indeed, turbulent, and impatient of oppression, but brave, generous, and simple-hearted. In the midst of distress and peril she had given birth to a son, afterwards the Emperor Joseph the Second. Scarcely had she risen from her couch, when she hastened to Presburg. There, in the sight of an innumerable multitude, she was crowned with the crown and robed with the robe of St. Stephen. No spectator could refrain his tears when the beautiful young mother, still weak from child-bearing, rode, after the fashion of her fathers, up the Mount of Defiance, unsheathed the ancient sword of state, shook it towards north and south, east and west, and, with a glow on her pale face, challenged the four corners of the world to dispute her rights and those of her boy. At the first sitting of the Diet she appeared clad in deep mourning for her father, and in pathetic and dignified words implored her people to support her just cause. Magnates and deputies sprang up, half drew their sabres, and with eager voices vowed to stand by her with their lives and fortunes. Till then, her firmness had never once forsaken her before the public eye, but at that shout she sank down upon her throne, and wept aloud. Still more touching was the sight when, a few days later, she came before the Estates of her realm, and held up before them the little Archduke in her arms. Then it was that the enthusiasm

of Hungary broke forth into that war-cry which soon resounded throughout Europe, "Let us die for our King, Maria Theresa!"

In the mean time, Frederic was meditating a change of policy. He had no wish to raise France to supreme power on the Continent, at the expense of the house of Hapsburg. His first object was, to rob the Queen of Hungary. His second was, that, if possible, nobody should rob her but himself. He had entered into engagements with the powers leagued against Austria; but these engagements were in his estimation of no more force than the guarantee formerly given to the "Pragmatic Sanction." His game now was to secure his share of the plunder by betraying his accomplices. Maria Theresa was little inclined to listen to any such compromise; but the English government represented to her so strongly the necessity of buying off so formidable an enemy as Frederic, that she agreed to negotiate. The negotiation would not, however, have ended in a treaty, had not the arms of Frederic been crowned with a second victory. Prince Charles of Lorraine, brother-in-law to Maria Theresa, a bold and active, though unfortunate general, gave battle to the Prussians at Chotusitz, and was defeated. The king was still only a learner of the military art. He acknowledged, at a later period, that his success on this occasion was to be attributed, not at all to his own generalship, but solely to the valour and steadiness of his troops. He completely effaced, however, by his courage and energy, the stain which Molwitz had left on his reputation.

A peace, concluded under the English mediation, was the fruit of this battle. Maria Theresa ceded Silesia; Frederic abandoned his allies: Saxony followed his example; and the Queen was left at liberty to turn her whole force against France and Bavaria. She was everywhere triumphant. The French were compelled to evacuate Bohemia,

and with difficulty effected their escape. The whole line of their retreat might be tracked by the corpses of thousands who had died of cold, fatigue and hunger. Many of those who reached their country carried with them the seeds of death. Bavaria was overrun by bands of ferocious warriors from that bloody "debatable land," which lies on the frontier between Christendom and Islam. The terrible names of the Pandoor, the Croat, and the Hussar, then first became familiar to western Europe. The unfortunate Charles of Bavaria, vanquished by Austria, betrayed by Prussia, driven from his hereditary states, and neglected by his allies, was hurried by shame and remorse to an untimely end. An English army appeared in the heart of Germany, and defeated the French at Dettingen. The Austrian captains already began to talk of completing the work of Marlborough and Eugene, and of compelling France to relinquish Alsace and the Three Bishoprics.

The Court of Versailles, in this peril, looked to Frederic for help. He had been guilty of two great treasons, perhaps he might be induced to commit a third. The Duchess of Chateauroux then held the chief influence over the feeble Louis. She determined to send an agent to Berlin, and Voltaire was selected for the mission. He eagerly undertook the task; for, while his literary fame filled all Europe, he was troubled with a childish craving for political distinction. He was vain, and not without reason, of his address, and of his insinuating eloquence; and he flattered himself that he possessed boundless influence over the King of Prussia. The truth was, that he knew, as yet, only one corner of Frederic's character. He was well acquainted with all the petty vanities and affectations of the poetaster; but was not aware that these foibles were united with all the talents and vices which lead to success in active life; and that the unlucky versifier who bored him with reams of middling Alex-

andrians, was the most vigilant, suspicious, and severe of politicians.

Voltaire was received with every mark of respect and friendship, was lodged in the palace, and had a seat daily at the royal table. The negotiation was of an extraordinary description. Nothing can be conceived more whimsical than the conferences which took place between the first literary man and the first practical man of the age, whom a strange weakness had induced to exchange their parts. The great poet would talk of nothing but treaties and guarantees, and the great king of nothing but metaphors and rhymes. On one occasion Voltaire put into his Majesty's hand a paper on the state of Europe, and received it back with verses scrawled on the margin. In secret they both laughed at each other. Voltaire did not spare the king's poems; and the king has left on record his opinion of Voltaire's diplomacy. "He had no credentials," says Frederic, "and the whole mission was a joke, a mere farce."

But what the influence of Voltaire could not effect, the rapid progress of the Austrian arms effected. If it should be in the power of Maria Theresa and George the Second to dictate terms of peace to France, what chance was there that Prussia would long retain Silesia? Frederic's conscience told him that he had acted perfidiously and inhumanly towards the Queen of Hungary. That her resentment was strong she had given ample proof; and of her respect for treaties he judged by his own. Guarantees, he said, were mere filigree, pretty to look at, but too brittle to bear the slightest pressure. He thought it his safest course to ally himself closely to France, and again to attack the Empress Queen. Accordingly, in the autumn of 1744, without notice, without any decent pretext, he recommenced hostilities, marched through the electorate of Saxony without troubling himself about the permission of

the Elector, invaded Bohemia, took Prague, and even menaced Vienna.

It was now that, for the first time, he experienced the inconstancy of fortune. An Austrian army under Charles of Lorraine threatened his communications with Silesia. Saxony was all in arms behind him. He found it necessary to save himself by a retreat. He afterwards owned that his failure was the natural effect of his own blunders. No general, he said, had ever committed greater faults. It must be added, that to the reverses of this campaign he always ascribed his subsequent successes. It was in the midst of difficulty and disgrace that he caught the first clear glimpse of the principles of the military art.

The memorable year 1745 followed. The war raged by sea and land, in Italy, in Germany, and in Flanders; and even England, after many years of profound internal quiet, saw, for the last time, hostile armies set in battle array against each other. This year is memorable in the life of Frederic, as the date at which his noviciate in the art of war may be said to have terminated. There have been great captains whose precocious and self-taught military skill resembled intuition. Condé, Clive, and Napoleon are examples. But Frederic was not one of these brilliant portents. His proficiency in military science was simply the proficiency which a man of vigorous faculties makes in any science to which he applies his mind with earnestness and industry. It was at Hohenfreidberg that he first proved how much he had profited by his errors, and by their consequences. His victory on that day was chiefly due to his skilful dispositions, and convinced Europe that the prince who, a few years before, had stood aghast in the rout of Molwitz, had attained in the military art a mastery equalled by none of his contemporaries, or equalled by Saxe alone. The victory of Hohenfreidberg was speedily followed by that of Sorr.

In the mean time, the arms of France had been victorious in the Low Countries. Frederic had no longer reason to fear that Maria Theresa would be able to give law to Europe, and he began to meditate a fourth breach of his engagements. The court of Versailles was alarmed and mortified. A letter of earnest expostulation, in the handwriting of Louis, was sent to Berlin; but in vain. In the autumn of 1745, Frederic made peace with England, and, before the close of the year, with Austria also. The pretensions of Charles of Bavaria could present no obstacle to an accommodation. That unhappy prince was no more; and Francis of Lorraine, the husband of Maria Theresa, was raised, with the general consent of the Germanic body, to the Imperial throne.

Prussia was again at peace; but the European war lasted till, in the year 1748, it was terminated by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Of all the powers that had taken part in it, the only gainer was Frederic. Not only had he added to his patrimony the fine province of Silesia; he had, by his unprincipled dexterity, succeeded so well in alternately depressing the scale of Austria and that of France, that he was generally regarded as holding the balance of Europe—a high dignity for one who ranked lowest among kings, and whose great-grandfather had been no more than a Margrave. By the public, the King of Prussia was considered as a politician destitute alike of morality and decency, insatiably rapacious, and shamelessly false; nor was the public much in the wrong. He was at the same time allowed to be a man of parts,—a rising general, a shrewd negotiator and administrator. Those qualities wherein he surpassed all mankind, were as yet unknown to others or to himself; for they were qualities which shine out only on a dark ground. His career had hitherto, with little interruption, been prosperous; and it was only in adversity, in adversity which seemed without hope or resource, in adversity that would

have overwhelmed even men celebrated for strength of mind, that his real greatness could be shown.

He had from the commencement of his reign applied himself to public business after a fashion unknown among kings. Louis XIV., indeed, had been his own prime minister, and had exercised a general superintendence over all the departments of the government; but this was not sufficient for Frederic. He was not content with being his own prime minister—he would be his own sole minister. Under him there was no room, not merely for a Richelieu or a Mazarin, but for a Colbert, a Louvois, or a Torcy. A love of labour for its own sake, a restless and insatiable longing to dictate, to intermeddle, to make his power felt, a profound scorn and distrust of his fellow creatures, indisposed him to ask counsel, to confide important secrets, to delegate ample powers. The highest functionaries under his government were mere clerks, and were not so much trusted by him as valuable clerks are often trusted by the heads of departments. He was his own treasurer, his own commander-in-chief, his own intendant of public works; his own minister for trade and justice, for home affairs and foreign affairs; his own master of the horse, steward, and chamberlain. Matters of which no chief of an office in any other government would ever hear, were in this singular monarchy, decided by the King in person. If a traveller wished for a good place to see a review, he had to write to Frederic, and received next day, from a royal messenger, Frederic's answer signed by Frederic's own hand. This was an extravagant, a morbid activity. The public business would assuredly have been better done if each department had been put under a man of talents and integrity, and if the King had contented himself with a general control. In this manner the advantages which belong to unity of design, and the advantages which belong to the division of labour, would have been to a great extent combined. But

such a system would not have suited the peculiar temper of Frederic. He could tolerate no will, no reason in the state, save his own. He wished for no abler assistance than that of penmen who had just understanding enough to translate, to transcribe, to make out his scrawls, and to put his concise Yes and No into an official form. Of the higher intellectual faculties, there is as much in a copying machine, or a lithographic press, as he required from a secretary of the cabinet.

His own exertions were such as were hardly to be expected from a human body, or a human mind. At Potsdam, his ordinary residence, he rose at three in summer and four in winter. A page soon appeared, with a large basketful of all the letters which had arrived for the King by the last courier—despatches from ambassadors, reports from officers of revenue, plans of buildings, proposals for draining marshes, complaints from persons who thought themselves aggrieved, applications from persons who wanted titles, military commissions, and civil situations. He examined the seals with a keen eye; for he was never for a moment free from the suspicion that some fraud might be practised on him. Then he read the letters, divided them into several packets, and signified his pleasure, generally by a mark, often by two or three words, now and then by some cutting epigram. By eight he had generally finished this part of his task. The adjutant-general was then in attendance, and received instructions for the day as to all the military arrangements of the kingdom. Then the King went to review his guards, not as kings ordinarily review their guards, but with the minute attention and severity of an old drill-sergeant. In the mean time the four cabinet secretaries had been employed in answering the letters on which the King had that morning signified his will. These unhappy men were forced to work all the year round like negro-slaves in the time of the sugar-crop. They never had a

holiday. They never knew what it was to dine. It was necessary that, before they stirred, they should finish the whole of their work. The King, always on his guard against treachery, took from the heap a handful at random, and looked into them to see whether his instructions had been exactly followed. This was no bad security against foul play on the part of the secretaries; for if one of them were detected in a trick, he might think himself fortunate if he escaped with five years of imprisonment in a dungeon. Frederic then signed the replies, and all were sent off the same evening.

The general principles on which this strange government was conducted, deserve attention. The policy of Frederic was essentially the same as his father's; but Frederic, while he carried that policy to lengths to which his father never thought of carrying it, cleared it at the same time from the absurdities with which his father had encumbered it. The King's first object was to have a great, efficient, and well-trained army. He had a kingdom which in extent and population was hardly in the second rank of European powers; and yet he aspired to a place not inferior to that of the sovereigns of England, France, and Austria. For that end it was necessary that Prussia should be all sting. Louis XV., with five times as many subjects as Frederic, and more than five times as large a revenue, had not a more formidable army. The proportion which the soldiers in Prussia bore to the people, seems hardly credible. Of the males in the vigour of life, a seventh part were probably under arms; and this great force had, by drilling, by reviewing, and by the unsparing use of cane and scourge, been taught to perform all evolutions with a rapidity and a precision which would have astonished Villars or Eugene. The elevated feelings which are necessary to the best kind of army were then wanting to the Prussian service. In those ranks were not found the religious and political

enthusiasm which inspired the pikemen of Cromwell—the patriotic ardour, the thirst of glory, the devotion to a great leader, which inflamed the Old Guard of Napoleon. But in all the mechanical parts of the military calling, the Prussians were as superior to the English and French troops of that day, as the English and French troops to a rustic militia.

Though the pay of the Prussian soldier was small, though every rixdollar of extraordinary charge was scrutinised by Frederic with a vigilance and suspicion such as Mr. Joseph Hume never brought to the examination of an army-estimate, the expense of such an establishment was, for the means of the country, enormous. In order that it might not be utterly ruinous, it was necessary that every other expense should be cut down to the lowest possible point. Accordingly Frederic, though his dominions bordered on the sea, had no navy. He neither had nor wished to have colonies. His judges, his fiscal officers, were meanly paid. His ministers at foreign courts walked on foot, or drove shabby old carriages till the axletrees gave way. Even to his highest diplomatic agents, who resided at London and Paris, he allowed less than a thousand pounds sterling a year. The royal household was managed with a frugality unusual in the establishments of opulent subjects—unexampled in any other palace. The king loved good eating and drinking, and during great part of his life took pleasure in seeing his table surrounded by guests; yet the whole charge of his kitchen was brought within the sum of two thousand pounds sterling a year. He examined every extraordinary item with a care which might be thought to suit the mistress of a boarding-house better than a great prince. When more than four rixdollars were asked of him for a hundred oysters, he stormed as if he had heard that one of his generals had sold a fortress to the Empress-Queen. Not a bottle of champagne was uncorked without his ex-

press order. The game of the royal parks and forests, a serious head of expenditure in most kingdoms, was to him a source of profit. The whole was farmed out; and though the farmers were almost ruined by their contract, the king would grant them no remission. His wardrobe consisted of one fine gala dress, which lasted him all his life; of two or three old coats fit for Monmouth Street, of yellow waistcoats soiled with snuff, and of huge boots embrowned by time. One taste alone sometimes allured him beyond the limits of parsimony, nay, even beyond the limits of prudence—the taste for building. In all other things his economy was such as we might call by a harsher name, if we did not reflect that his funds were drawn from a heavily taxed people, and that it was impossible for him, without excessive tyranny, to keep up at once a formidable army and a splendid court.

Considered as an administrator, Frederic had undoubtedly many titles to praise. Order was strictly maintained throughout his dominions. Property was secure. A great liberty of speaking and of writing was allowed. Confident in the irresistible strength derived from a great army, the king looked down on malecontents and libellers with a wise disdain; and gave little encouragement to spies and informers. When he was told of the disaffection of one of his subjects, he merely asked, "How many thousand men can he bring into the field?" He once saw a crowd staring at something on a wall. He rode up, and found that the object of curiosity was a scurrilous placard against himself. The placard had been posted up so high that it was not easy to read it. Frederic ordered his attendants to take it down and put it lower. "My people and I," he said, "have come to an agreement, which satisfies us both. They are to say what they please, and I am to do what I please." No person would have dared to publish in London satires on George II. approaching to the atrocity of

those satires on Frederic, which the booksellers at Berlin sold with impunity. One bookseller sent to the palace a copy of the most stinging lampoon that perhaps was ever written in the world, the "Memoirs of Voltaire," published by Beaumarchais, and asked for his majesty's orders. "Do not advertise it in an offensive manner," said the king; "but sell it by all means. I hope it will pay you well." Even among statesmen accustomed to the license of a free press such steadfastness of mind as this is not very common.

It is due also to the memory of Frederic to say, that he earnestly laboured to secure to his people the great blessing of cheap and speedy justice. He was one of the first rulers who abolished the cruel and absurd practice of torture. No sentence of death, pronounced by the ordinary tribunals, was executed without his sanction; and his sanction, except in cases of murder, was rarely given. Towards his troops he acted in a very different manner. Military offences were punished with such barbarous scourging, that to be shot was considered by the Prussian soldier as a secondary punishment. Indeed, the principle which pervaded Frederic's whole policy was this—that the more severely the army is governed, the safer it is to treat the rest of the community with lenity.

Religious persecution was unknown under his government—unless some foolish and unjust restrictions which lay upon the Jews may be regarded as forming an exception. His policy with respect to the Catholics of Silesia presented an honourable contrast to the policy which, under very similar circumstances, England long followed with respect to the Catholics of Ireland. Every form of religion and irreligion found an asylum in his states. The scoffer whom the parliaments of France had sentenced to a cruel death, was consoled by a commission in the Prussian service. The Jesuit who could show his face nowhere

else—who in Britain was still subject to penal laws, who was proscribed by France, Spain, Portugal, and Naples, who had been given up even by the Vatican—found safety and the means of subsistence in the Prussian dominions.

Most of the vices of Frederic's administration resolve themselves into one vice—the spirit of meddling. The indefatigable activity of his intellect, his dictatorial temper, his military habits, all inclined him to this great fault. He drilled his people as he drilled his grenadiers. Capital and industry were diverted from their natural direction by a crowd of preposterous regulations. There was a monopoly of coffee, a monopoly of tobacco, a monopoly of refined sugar. The public money, of which the king was generally so sparing, was lavishly spent in ploughing bogs, in planting mulberry-trees amidst the sand, in bringing sheep from Spain to improve the Saxon wool, in bestowing prizes for fine yarn, in building manufactories of porcelain, manufactories of carpets, manufactories of hardware, manufactories of lace. Neither the experience of other rulers, nor his own, could ever teach him that something more than an edict and a grant of public money is required to create a Lyons, a Brussels, or a Birmingham.

For his commercial policy, however, there is some excuse. He had on his side illustrious examples and popular prejudice. Grievously as he erred, he erred in company with his age. In other departments his meddling was altogether without apology. He interfered with the course of justice as well as with the course of trade; and set up his own crude notions of equity against the law as expounded by the unanimous voice of the gravest magistrates. It never occurred to him that a body of men, whose lives were passed in adjudicating on questions of civil right, were more likely to form correct opinions on such questions than a prince whose attention was divided between a thousand objects, and who had probably never read a law-book

through. The resistance opposed to him by the tribunals inflamed him to fury. He reviled his Chancellor. He kicked the shins of his Judges. He did not, it is true, intend to act unjustly. He firmly believed that he was doing right, and defending the cause of the poor against the wealthy. Yet this well-meant meddling probably did far more harm than all the explosions of his evil passions during the whole of his long reign. We could make shift to live under a debauchee or a tyrant; but to be ruled by a busy-body is more than human nature can bear.

The same passion for directing and regulating appeared in every part of the King's policy. Every lad of a certain station in life, was forced to go to certain schools within the Prussian dominions. If a young Prussian repaired, though but for a few weeks, to Leyden or Gottingen for the purpose of study, the offence was punished with civil disabilities, and sometimes with confiscation of property. Nobody was to travel without the royal permission. If the permission were granted, the pocket-money of the tourist was fixed by royal ordinances. A merchant might take with him two hundred and fifty rixdollars in gold, a noble was allowed to take four hundred; for it may be observed, in passing, that Frederic studiously kept up the old distinction between the nobles and the community. In speculation, he was a French philosopher; but in action, a German prince. He talked and wrote about the privileges of blood in the style of Siêyes; but in practice no chapter in the empire looked with a keener eye to genealogies and quarterings.

Such was Frederic the Ruler. But there was another Frederic, the Frederic of Rheinsberg, the fiddler and flute-player, the poetaster and metaphysician. Amidst the cares of state the King had retained his passion for music, for reading, for writing, for literary society. To these amusements he devoted all the time he could snatch from the

business of war and government; and perhaps more light is thrown on his character by what passed during his hours of relaxation, than by his battles or his laws.

It was the just boast of Schiller, that in his country no Augustus, no Lorenzo, had watched over the infancy of art. The rich and energetic language of Luther, driven by the Latin from the schools of pedants, and by the French from the palaces of kings, had taken refuge among the people. Of the powers of that language Frederic had no notion. He generally spoke of it, and of those who used it, with the contempt of ignorance. His library consisted of French books; at his table nothing was heard but French conversation.

The associates of his hours of relaxation were, for the most part, foreigners. Britain furnished to the royal circle two distinguished men, born in the highest rank, and driven by civil dissensions from the land to which, under happier circumstances, their talents and virtues might have been a source of strength and glory. George Keith, Earl Marischal of Scotland, had taken arms for the house of Stuart in 1715, and his younger brother James, then only seventeen years old, had fought gallantly by his side. When all was lost they retired to the Continent, roved from country to country, served under many standards, and so bore themselves as to win the respect and good-will of many who had no love for the Jacobite cause. Their long wanderings terminated at Potsdam; nor had Frederic any associates who deserved or obtained so large a share of his esteem. They were not only accomplished men, but nobles and warriors, capable of serving him in war and diplomacy, as well as of amusing him at supper. Alone of all his companions they appear never to have had reason to complain of his demeanour towards them. Some of those who knew the palace best pronounced that the Lord Marischal was the only human being whom Frederic ever really loved.

Italy sent to the parties at Potsdam the ingenious and amiable Algarotti, and Bastiani, the most crafty, cautious, and servile of Abbés. But the greater part of the society which Frederic had assembled round him, was drawn from France. Maupertuis had acquired some celebrity by the journey which he made to Lapland, for the purpose of ascertaining, by actual measurement, the shape of our planet. He was placed in the Chair of the Academy of Berlin, a humble imitation of the renowned academy of Paris. Baculard D'Arnaud, a young poet, who was thought to have given promise of great things, had been induced to quit his country, and to reside at the Prussian Court. The Marquess D'Argens was among the King's favourite companions, on account, as it should seem, of the strong opposition between their characters. The parts of D'Argens were good, and his manners those of a finished French gentleman; but his whole soul was dissolved in sloth, timidity, and self-indulgence. His was one of that abject class of minds which are superstitious without being religious. Hating Christianity with a rancour which made him incapable of rational inquiry: unable to see in the harmony and beauty of the universe the traces of divine power and wisdom, he was the slave of dreams and omens; —would not sit down to the table with thirteen in company; turned pale if the salt fell towards him; begged his guests not to cross their knives and forks on their plates; and would not for the world commence a journey on Friday. His health was a subject of constant anxiety to him. Whenever his head ached, or his pulse beat quick, his dastardly fears and effeminate precautions were the jest of all Berlin. All this suited the King's purpose admirably. He wanted somebody by whom he might be amused, and whom he might despise. When he wished to pass half an hour in easy polished conversation, D'Argens was an ex-

cellent companion; when he wanted to vent his spleen and contempt, D'Argens was an excellent butt.

With these associates, and others of the same class, Frederic loved to spend the time which he could steal from public cares. He wished his supper-parties to be gay and easy; and invited his guests to lay aside all restraint, and to forget that he was at the head of a hundred and sixty thousand soldiers, and was absolute master of the life and liberty of all who sat at meat with him. There was, therefore, at these meetings the outward show of ease. The wit and learning of the company were ostentatiously displayed. The discussions on history and literature were often highly interesting. But the absurdity of all the religions known among men was the chief topic of conversation; and the audacity with which doctrines and names venerated throughout Christendom were treated on these occasions, startled even persons accustomed to the society of French and English free-thinkers. But real liberty, or real affection, was in this brilliant society not to be found. Absolute kings seldom have friends: and Frederic's faults were such as, even where perfect equality exists, make friendship exceedingly precarious. He had indeed many qualities, which, on a first acquaintance, were captivating. His conversation was lively; his manners to those whom he desired to please were even caressing. No man could flatter with more delicacy. No man succeeded more completely in inspiring those who approached him with vague hopes of some great advantage from his kindness. But under this fair exterior he was a tyrant—suspicious, disdainful, and malevolent. He had one taste which may be pardoned in a boy, but which, when habitually and deliberately indulged by a man of mature age and strong understanding, is almost invariably the sign of a bad heart—a taste for severe practical jokes. If a friend of the king was fond of dress, oil was flung over his richest suit. If he was fond

of money, some prank was invented to make him disburse more than he could spare. If he was hypochondriacal, he was made to believe he had the dropsy. If he particularly set his heart on visiting a place, a letter was forged to frighten him from going thither. These things, it may be said, are trifles. They are so; but they are indications, not to be mistaken, of a nature to which the sight of human suffering and human degradation is an agreeable excitement.

Frederic had a keen eye for the foibles of others, and loved to communicate his discoveries. He had some talent for sarcasm, and considerable skill in detecting the sore places where sarcasm would be most actually felt. His vanity, as well as his malignity, found gratification in the vexation and confusion of those who smarted under his caustic jests. Yet in truth his success on these occasions belonged quite as much to the king as to the wit. We read that Commodus descended, sword in hand, into the arena against a wretched gladiator, armed only with a foil of lead, and, after shedding the blood of the helpless victim, struck medals to commemorate the inglorious victory. The triumphs of Frederic in the war of repartee, were much of the same kind. How to deal with him was the most puzzling of questions. To appear constrained in his presence was to disobey his commands, and to spoil his amusement. Yet if his associates were enticed by his graciousness to indulge in the familiarity of a cordial intimacy, he was certain to make them repent of their presumption by some cruel humiliation. To resent his affronts was perilous; yet not to resent them was to deserve and to invite them. In his view, those who mutinied were insolent and ungrateful; those who submitted, were curs made to receive bones and kickings with the same fawning patience. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive how anything short of the rage of hunger should have induced men to bear the misery of being the associates of the Great King. It was no lu-

crative post. His Majesty was as severe and economical in his friendships as in the other charges of his establishment, and as unlikely to give a rixdollar too much for his guests as for his dinners. The sum which he allowed to a poet or a philosopher, was the very smallest sum for which such poet or philosopher could be induced to sell himself into slavery; and the bondsman might think himself fortunate, if what had been so grudgingly given was not, after years of suffering, rudely and arbitrarily withdrawn.

Potsdam was, in truth, what it was called by one of its most illustrious inmates, the Palace of Alcina. At the first glance it seemed to be a delightful spot, where every intellectual and physical enjoyment awaited the happy adventurer. Every new comer was received with eager hospitality, intoxicated with flattery, encouraged to expect prosperity and greatness. It was in vain that a long succession of favourites who had entered that abode with delight and hope, and who, after a short term of delusive happiness, had been doomed to expiate their folly by years of wretchedness and degradation, raised their voices to warn the aspirant who approached the charmed threshold. Some had wisdom enough to discover the truth early, and spirit enough to fly without looking back; others lingered on to a cheerless and unhonoured old age. We have no hesitation in saying that the poorest author of that time in London, sleeping on a bulk, dining in a cellar, with a cravat of paper, and a skewer for a shirt-pin, was a happier man than any of the literary inmates of Frederic's Court.

But of all who entered the enchanted garden in the inebriation of delight, and quitted it in agonies of rage and shame, the most remarkable was Voltaire. Many circumstances had made him desirous of finding a home at a distance from his country. His fame had raised him up enemies. His sensibility gave them a formidable advantage over him. They were, indeed, contemptible assailants.

Of all that they wrote against him, nothing has survived except what he has himself preserved. But the constitution of his mind resembled the constitution of those bodies in which the slightest scratch of a bramble, or the bite of a gnat, never fails to fester. Though his reputation was rather raised than lowered by the abuse of such writers as Fréron and Desfontaines—though the vengeance which he took on Fréron and Desfontaines was such, that scourging, branding, pillorying, would have been a trifle to it—there is reason to believe that they gave him far more pain than he ever gave them. Though he enjoyed during his own lifetime the reputation of a classic—though he was extolled by his contemporaries above all poets, philosophers, and historians—though his works were read with as much delight and admiration at Moscow and Westminster, at Florence and Stockholm, as at Paris itself, he was yet tormented by that restless jealousy which should seem to belong only to minds burning with the desire of fame, and yet conscious of impotence. To men of letters who could by no possibility be his rivals, he was, if they behaved well to him, not merely just, not merely courteous, but often a hearty friend and a munificent benefactor. But to every writer who rose to a celebrity approaching his own, he became either a disguised or an avowed enemy. He slyly depreciated Montesquieu and Buffon. He publicly, and with violent outrage, made war on Jean Jacques. Nor had he the art of hiding his feelings under the semblance of good-humour or of contempt. With all his great talents, and all his long experience of the world, he had no more self-command than a petted child or a hysterical woman. Whenever he was mortified, he exhausted the whole rhetoric of anger and sorrow to express his mortification. His torrents of bitter words—his stamping and cursing—his grimaces and his tears of rage—were a rich feast to those abject natures, whose delight is in the agonies of powerful

spirits and in the abasement of immortal names. These creatures had now found out a way of galling him to the very quick. In one walk, at least, it had been admitted by envy itself that he was without a living competitor. Since Racine had been laid among the great men whose dust made the holy precinct of Port-Royal holier, no tragic poet had appeared who could contest the palm with the author of *Zaire*, of *Alzire*, and of *Merope*. At length a rival was announced. Old Crébillon, who, many years before, had obtained some theatrical success, and who had long been forgotten, came forth from his garret in one of the meanest lanes near the Rue St. Antoine, and was welcomed by the acclamations of envious men of letters, and of a capricious populace. A thing called *Catiline*, which he had written in his retirement, was acted with boundless applause. Of this execrable piece it is sufficient to say, that the plot turns on a love affair, carried on in all the forms of Scudery, between Catiline, whose confidant is the Prætor Lentulus, and Tullia, the daughter of Cicero. The theatre resounded with acclamations. The king pensioned the successful poet; and the coffee-houses pronounced that Voltaire was a clever man, but that the real tragic inspiration, the celestial fire which glowed in Corneille and Racine, was to be found in Crébillon alone.

The blow went to Voltaire's heart. Had his wisdom and fortitude been in proportion to the fertility of his intellect, and to the brilliancy of his wit, he would have seen that it was out of the power of all the puffers and detractors in Europe to put *Catiline* above *Zaire;* but he had none of the magnanimous patience with which Milton and Bentley left their claims to the unerring judgment of time. He eagerly engaged in an undignified competition with Crébillon, and produced a series of plays on the same subjects which his rival had treated. These pieces were coolly received. Angry with the court, angry with the capital,

Voltaire began to find pleasure in the prospect of exile. His attachment for Madame de Châtelet long prevented him from executing his purpose. Her death set him at liberty; and he determined to take refuge at Berlin.

To Berlin he was invited by a series of letters, couched in terms of the most enthusiastic friendship and admiration. For once the rigid parsimony of Frederic seemed to have relaxed. Orders, honourable offices, a liberal pension, a well-served table, stately apartments under a royal roof, were offered in return for the pleasure and honour which were expected from the society of the first wit of the age. A thousand louis were remitted for the charges of the journey. No ambassador setting out from Berlin for a court of the first rank, had ever been more amply supplied. But Voltaire was not satisfied. At a later period, when he possessed an ample fortune, he was one of the most liberal of men; but till his means had become equal to his wishes, his greediness for lucre was unrestrained either by justice or by shame. He had the effrontery to ask for a thousand louis more, in order to enable him to bring his niece, Madame Denis, the ugliest of coquettes, in his company. The indelicate rapacity of the poet produced its natural effect on the severe and frugal king. The answer was a dry refusal. "I did not," said his Majesty, "solicit the honour of the lady's society." On this, Voltaire went off into a paroxysm of childish rage. "Was there ever such avarice? He has hundreds of tubs full of dollars in his vaults, and haggles with me about a poor thousand louis." It seemed that the negotiation would be broken off; but Frederic, with great dexterity, affected indifference, and seemed inclined to transfer his idolatry to Baculard d'Arnaud. His Majesty even wrote some bad verses, of which the sense was, that Voltaire was a setting sun, and that Arnaud was rising. Good-natured friends soon carried the lines to Voltaire. He was in his bed. He jumped out in his shirt, danced

about the room with rage, and sent for his passport and his post-horses. It was not difficult to foresee the end of a connection which had such a beginning.

It was in the year 1750 that Voltaire left the great capital, which he was not to see again till, after the lapse of nearly thirty years, he returned, bowed down by extreme old age, to die in the midst of a splendid and ghastly triumph. His reception in Prussia was such as might well have elated a less vain and excitable mind. He wrote to his friends at Paris, that the kindness and the attention with which he had been welcomed surpassed description—that the king was the most amiable of men—that Potsdam was the Paradise of philosophers. He was created chamberlain, and received, together with his gold key, the cross of an order, and a patent ensuring to him a pension of eight hundred pounds sterling a year for life. A hundred and sixty pounds a year were promised to his niece if she survived him. The royal cooks and coachmen were put at his disposal. He was lodged in the same apartments in which Saxe had lived, when, at the height of power and glory, he visited Prussia. Frederic, indeed, stooped for a time even to use the language of adulation. He pressed to his lips the meagre hand of the little grinning skeleton, whom he regarded as the dispenser of immortal renown. He would add, he said, to the titles which he owed to his ancestors and his sword, another title, derived from his last and proudest acquisition. His style should run thus:—Frederic, King of Prussia, Margrave of Brandenburg, Sovereign Duke of Silesia, Possessor of Voltaire. But even amidst the delights of the honey-moon, Voltaire's sensitive vanity began to take alarm. A few days after his arrival, he could not help telling his niece, that the amiable king had a trick of giving a sly scratch with one hand while patting and stroking with the other. Soon came hints not the less alarming because mysterious. "The supper parties are

delicious. The king is the life of the company. But—I have operas and comedies, reviews and concerts, my studies and books. But—but—Berlin is fine, the princess charming, the maids of honour handsome. But''——

This eccentric friendship was fast cooling. Never had there met two persons so exquisitely fitted to plague each other. Each of them had exactly the fault of which the other was most impatient; and they were, in different ways, the most impatient of mankind. Frederic was frugal, almost niggardly. When he had secured his plaything, he began to think that he had bought it too dear. Voltaire, on the other hand, was greedy, even to the extent of impudence and knavery; and conceived that the favourite of a monarch, who had barrels full of gold and silver laid up in cellars, ought to make a fortune which a receiver-general might envy. They soon discovered each other's feelings. Both were angry, and a war began, in which Frederic stooped to the part of Harpagon, and Voltaire to that of Scapin. It is humiliating to relate, that the great warrior and statesman gave orders that his guest's allowance of sugar and chocolate should be curtailed. It is, if possible, a still more humiliating fact, that Voltaire indemnified himself by pocketing the wax-candles in the royal antechamber. Disputes about money, however, were not the most serious disputes of these extraordinary associates. The sarcasms soon galled the sensitive temper of the poet. D'Arnaud and D'Argens, Guichard and La Métrie, might, for the sake of a morsel of bread, be willing to bear the insolence of a master; but Voltaire was of another order. He knew that he was a potentate as well as Frederic; that his European reputation, and his incomparable power of covering whatever he hated with ridicule, made him an object of dread even to the leaders of armies and the rulers of nations. In truth, of all the intellectual weapons which have ever been wielded by man, the most terrible was the mockery

of Voltaire. Bigots and tyrants, who had never been moved by the wailing and cursing of millions, turned pale at his name. Principles unassailable by reason, principles which had withstood the fiercest attacks of power, the most valuable truths, the most generous sentiments, the noblest and most graceful images, the purest reputations, the most august institutions, began to look mean and loathsome as soon as that withering smile was turned upon them. To every opponent, however strong in his cause and his talents, in his station and his character, who ventured to encounter the great scoffer, might be addressed the caution which was given of old to the Archangel:—

> "I forewarn thee, shun
> His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
> To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
> Though temper'd heavenly; for that fatal dint,
> Save Him who reigns above, none can resist."

We cannot pause to recount how often that rare talent was exercised against rivals worthy of esteem—how often it was used to crush and torture enemies worthy only of silent disdain—how often it was perverted to the more noxious purpose of destroying the last solace of earthly misery, and the last restraint on earthly power. Neither can we pause to tell how often it was used to vindicate justice, humanity, and toleration—the principles of sound philosophy, the principles of free government. This is not the place for a full character of Voltaire.

Causes of quarrel multiplied fast. Voltaire, who, partly from love of money, and partly from love of excitement, was always fond of stockjobbing, became implicated in transactions of at least a dubious character. The King was delighted at having such an opportunity to humble his guest; and bitter reproaches and complaints were exchanged. Voltaire, too, was soon at war with the other men of letters

who surrounded the King; and this irritated Frederic, who, however, had himself chiefly to blame: for, from that love of tormenting which was in him a ruling passion, he perpetually lavished extravagant praises on small men and bad books, merely in order that he might enjoy the mortification and rage which on such occasions Voltaire took no pains to conceal. His majesty, however, soon had reason to regret the pains which he had taken to kindle jealousy among the members of his household. The whole palace was in a ferment with literary intrigues and cabals. It was to no purpose that the imperial voice, which kept a hundred and sixty thousand soldiers in order, was raised to quiet the contention of the exasperated wits. It was far easier to stir up such a storm than to lull it. Nor was Frederic, in his capacity of wit, by any means without his own share of vexations. He had sent a large quantity of verses to Voltaire, and requested that they might be returned, with remarks and correction. "See," exclaimed Voltaire, "what a quantity of his dirty linen the King has sent me to wash!" Talebearers were not wanting to carry the sarcasm to the royal ear; and Frederic was as much incensed as a Grub Street writer who had found his name in the "Dunciad."

This could not last. A circumstance which, when the mutual regard of the friends was in its first glow, would merely have been matter for laughter, produced a violent explosion. Maupertuis enjoyed as much of Frederic's good-will as any man of letters. He was President of the Academy of Berlin; and stood second to Voltaire, though at an immense distance, in the literary society which had been assembled at the Prussian court. Frederic had, by playing for his own amusement on the feelings of the two jealous and vainglorious Frenchmen, succeeded in producing a bitter enmity between them. Voltaire resolved to set his mark, a mark never to be effaced, on the forehead of Maupertuis; and wrote the exquisitely ludicrous diatribe

of *Doctor Akakia*. He showed this little piece to Frederic, who had too much taste and too much malice not to relish such delicious pleasantry. In truth, even at this time of day, it is not easy for any person who has the least perception of the ridiculous to read the jokes on the Latin city, the Patagonians, and the hole to the centre of the earth, without laughing till he cries. But though Frederic was diverted by this charming pasquinade, he was unwilling that it should get abroad. His self-love was interested. He had selected Maupertuis to fill the Chair of his Academy. If all Europe were taught to laugh at Maupertuis, would not the reputation of the Academy, would not even the dignity of its royal patron, be in some degree compromised? The King, therefore, begged Voltaire to suppress his performance. Voltaire promised to do so, and broke his word. The diatribe was published, and received with shouts of merriment and applause by all who could read the French language. The King stormed. Voltaire, with his usual disregard of truth, protested his innocence, and made up some lie about a printer or an amanuensis. The King was not to be so imposed upon. He ordered the pamphlet to be burned by the common hangman, and insisted upon having an apology from Voltaire, couched in the most abject terms. Voltaire sent back to the King his cross, his key, and the patent of his pension. After this burst of rage, the strange pair began to be ashamed of their violence, and went through the forms of reconciliation. But the breach was irreparable; and Voltaire took his leave of Frederic for ever. They parted with cold civility; but their hearts were big with resentment. Voltaire had in his keeping a volume of the King's poetry, and forgot to return it. This was, we believe, merely one of the oversights which men setting out upon a journey often commit. That Voltaire could have meditated plagiarism is quite incredible. He would not,

we are confident, for the half of Frederic's kingdom, have consented to father Frederic's verses. The King, however, who rated his own writings much above their value, and who was inclined to see all Voltaire's actions in the worst light, was enraged to think that his favourite compositions were in the hands of an enemy, as thievish as a daw and as mischievous as a monkey. In the anger excited by this thought, he lost sight of reason and decency, and determined on committing an outrage at once odious and ridiculous.

Voltaire had reached Frankfort. His niece, Madame Denis, came thither to meet him. He conceived himself secure from the power of his late master, when he was arrested by order of the Prussian resident. The precious volume was delivered up. But the Prussian agents had, no doubt, been instructed not to let Voltaire escape without some gross indignity. He was confined twelve days in a wretched hovel. Sentinels with fixed bayonets kept guard over him. His niece was dragged through the mire by the soldiers. Sixteen hundred dollars were extorted from him by his insolent jailers. It is absurd to say that this outrage is not to be attributed to the King. Was anybody punished for it? Was anybody called in question for it? Was it not consistent with Frederic's character? Was it not of a piece with his conduct on other similar occasions? Is it not notorious that he repeatedly gave private directions to his officers to pillage and demolish the houses of persons against whom he had a grudge—charging them at the same time to take their measures in such a way that his name might not be compromised? He acted thus towards Count Buhl in the Seven Years' War. Why should we believe that he would have been more scrupulous with regard to Voltaire?

When at length the illustrious prisoner regained his liberty, the prospect before him was but dreary. He was

an exile both from the country of his birth and from the country of his adoption. The French government had taken offence at his journey to Prussia, and would not permit him to return to Paris; and in the vicinity of Prussia it was not safe for him to remain.

He took refuge on the beautiful shores of Lake Leman. There, loosed from every tie which had hitherto restrained him, and having little to hope or to fear from courts and churches, he began his long war against all that, whether for good or evil, had authority over man; for what Burke said of the Constituent Assembly, was eminently true of this its great forerunner. He could not build—he could only pull down—he was the very Vitruvius of ruin. He has bequeathed to us not a single doctrine to be called by his name—not a single addition to the stock of our positive knowledge. But no human teacher ever left behind him so vast and terrible a wreck of truths and falsehoods—of things noble and things base—of things useful and things pernicious. From the time when his sojourn beneath the Alps commenced, the dramatist, the wit, the historian, was merged in a more important character. He was now the patriarch, the founder of a sect, the chief of a conspiracy, the prince of a wide intellectual commonwealth. He often enjoyed a pleasure dear to the better part of his nature, the pleasure of vindicating innocence which had no other helper—of repairing cruel wrongs—of punishing tyranny in high places. He had also the satisfaction, not less acceptable to his ravenous vanity, of hearing terrified Capuchins call him the Antichrist. But whether employed in works of benevolence, or in works of mischief, he never forgot Potsdam and Frankfort; and he listened anxiously to every murmur which indicated that a tempest was gathering in Europe, and that his vengeance was at hand.

He soon had his wish. Maria Theresa had never for a moment forgotten the great wrong which she had received

at the hand of Frederic. Young and delicate, just left an orphan, just about to be a mother, she had been compelled to fly from the ancient capital of her race; she had seen her fair inheritance dismembered by robbers, and of those robbers he had been the foremost. Without a pretext, without a provocation, in defiance of the most sacred engagements, he had attacked the helpless ally whom he was bound to defend. The Empress-Queen had the faults as well as the virtues which are connected with quick sensibility and a high spirit. There was no peril which she was not ready to brave, no calamity which she was not ready to bring on her subjects, or on the whole human race, if only she might once taste the sweetness of a complete revenge. Revenge, too, presented itself to her narrow and superstitious mind, in the guise of duty. Silesia had been wrested not only from the House of Austria, but from the Church of Rome.

The conqueror had indeed permitted his new subjects to worship God after their own fashion; but this was not enough. To bigotry it seemed an intolerable hardship that the Catholic Church, having long enjoyed ascendency, should be compelled to content itself with equality. Nor was this the only circumstance which led Maria Theresa to regard her enemy as the enemy of God. The profaneness of Frederic's writings and conversation, and the frightful rumours which were circulated respecting the immoralities of his private life, naturally shocked a woman who believed with the firmest faith all that her confessor told her; and who, though surrounded by temptations, though young and beautiful, though ardent in all her passions, though possessed of absolute power, had preserved her fame unsullied even by the breath of slander.

To recover Silesia, to humble the dynasty of Hohenzollern to the dust, was the great object of her life. She toiled during many years for this end, with zeal as indefa-

tigable as that which the poet ascribes to the stately goddess who tired out her immortal horses in the work of raising the nations against Troy, and who offered to give up to destruction her darling Sparta and Mycenæ, if only she might once see the smoke going up from the palace of Priam. With even such a spirit did the proud Austrian Juno strive to array against her foe a coalition such as Europe had never seen. Nothing would content her but that the whole civilised world, from the White Sea to the Adriatic, from the Bay of Biscay to the pastures of the wild horses of Tanais, should be combined in arms against one petty state.

She early succeeded by various arts in obtaining the adhesion of Russia. An ample share of spoil was promised to the King of Poland; and that prince, governed by his favourite, Count Buhl, readily promised the assistance of the Saxon forces. The great difficulty was with France. That the Houses of Bourbon and of Hapsburg should ever cordially co-operate in any great scheme of European policy, had long been thought, to use the strong expression of Frederic, just as impossible as that fire and water should amalgamate. The whole history of the Continent, during two centuries and a half, had been the history of the mutual jealousies and enmities of France and Austria. Since the administration of Richelieu, above all, it had been considered as the plain policy of the Most Christian King to thwart on all occasions the Court of Vienna; and to protect every member of the Germanic body who stood up against the dictation of the Cæsars. Common sentiments of religion had been unable to mitigate this strong antipathy. The rulers of France, even while clothed in the Roman purple, even while persecuting the heretics of Rochelle and Auvergne, had still looked with favour on the Lutheran and Calvinistic princes who were struggling against the chief of the empire. If the French ministers paid any respect to the traditional

rules handed down to them through many generations, they would have acted towards Frederic as the greatest of their predecessors acted towards Gustavus Adolphus. That there was deadly emnity between Prussia and Austria, was of itself a sufficient reason for close friendship between Prussia and France. With France, Frederic could never have any serious controversy. His territories were so situated, that his ambition, greedy and unscrupulous as it was, could never impel him to attack her of his own accord. He was more than half a Frenchman. He wrote, spoke, read nothing but French; he delighted in French society. The admiration of the French he proposed to himself as the best reward of all his exploits. It seemed incredible that any French government, however notorious for levity or stupidity, could spurn away such an ally.

The Court of Vienna, however, did not despair. The Austrian diplomatists propounded a new scheme of politics, which, it must be owned, was not altogether without plausibility. The great powers, according to this theory, had long been under a delusion. They had looked on each other as natural enemies, while in truth they were natural allies. A succession of cruel wars had devastated Europe, had thinned the population, had exhausted the public resources, had loaded governments with an immense burden of debt; and when, after two hundred years of murderous hostility or of hollow truce, the illustrious Houses whose enmity had distracted the world sat down to count their gains, to what did the real advantage on either side amount? Simply to this, that they had kept each other from thriving. It was not the King of France, it was not the Emperor, who had reaped the fruits of the Thirty Years' War, of the War of the Grand Alliance, of the War of the Pragmatic Sanction. Those fruits had been pilfered by states of the second and third rank, which, secured against jealousy by their insignificance, had dexterously aggrandised themselves

while pretending to serve the animosity of the great chiefs of Christendom. While the lion and tiger were tearing each other, the jackal had run off into the jungle with the prey. The real gainer by the Thirty Years' War had been neither France nor Austria, but Sweden. The real gainer by the War of the Grand Alliance had been neither France nor Austria, but Savoy. The real gainer by the War of the Pragmatic Sanction had been neither France nor Austria, but the upstart of Brandenburg. Of all these instances, the last was the most striking: France had made great efforts, had added largely to her military glory, and largely to her public burdens; and for what end? Merely that Frederic might rule Silesia. For this and this alone one French army, wasted by sword and famine, had perished in Bohemia; and another had purchased, with floods of the noblest blood, the barren glory of Fontenoy. And this prince, for whom France had suffered so much, was he a grateful, was he even an honest ally? Had he not been as false to the Court of Versailles as to the Court of Vienna? Had he not played on a large scale, the same part which, in private life, is played by the vile agent of chicane who sets his neighbours quarrelling, involves them in costly and interminable litigation, and betrays them to each other all round, certain that, whoever may be ruined, he shall be enriched? Surely the true wisdom of the great powers was to attack, not each other, but this common barrator, who, by inflaming the passions of both, by pretending to serve both, and by deserting both, had raised himself above the station to which he was born. The great object of Austria was to regain Silesia; the great object of France was to obtain an accession of territory on the side of Flanders. If they took opposite sides, the result would probably be that, after a war of many years, after the slaughter of many thousands of brave men, after the waste of many millions of crowns, they would lay down their arms with-

out having achieved either object; but, if they came to an understanding, there would be no risk, and no difficulty. Austria would willingly make in Belgium such cessions as France could not expect to obtain by ten pitched battles. Silesia would easily be annexed to the monarchy of which it had long been a part. The union of two such powerful governments would at once overawe the King of Prussia. If he resisted, one short campaign would settle his fate. France and Austria, long accustomed to rise from the game of war both losers, would, for the first time, both be gainers. There could be no room for jealousy between them. The power of both would be increased at once; the equilibrium between them would be preserved; and the only sufferer would be a mischievous and unprincipled buccanier, who deserved no tenderness from either.

These doctrines, attractive from their novelty and ingenuity, soon became fashionable at the supper-parties and in the coffee-houses of Paris, and were espoused by every gay marquis and every facetious abbé who was admitted to see Madame de Pompadour's hair curled and powdered. It was not, however, to any political theory that the strange coalition between France and Austria owed its origin. The real motive which induced the great continental powers to forget their old animosities and their old state maxims, was personal aversion to the King of Prussia. This feeling was strongest in Maria Theresa; but it was by no means confined to her. Frederic, in some respects a good master, was emphatically a bad neighbour. That he was hard in all his dealings, and quick to take all advantages, was not his most odious fault. His bitter and scoffing speech had inflicted keener wounds than his ambition. In his character of wit he was under less restraint than even in his character of ruler. Satirical verses against all the princes and ministers of Europe were ascribed to his pen. In his letters and conversation he alluded to the greatest potentates

of the age in terms which would have better suited Collé, in a war of repartee with young Crébillon at Pelletier's table, than a great sovereign speaking of great sovereigns. About women he was in the habit of expressing himself in a manner which it was impossible for the meekest of women to forgive; and, unfortunately for him, almost the whole Continent was then governed by women who were by no means conspicuous for meekness. Maria Theresa herself had not escaped his scurrilous jests; the Empress Elizabeth of Russia knew that her gallantries afforded him a favourite theme for ribaldry and invective; Madame de Pompadour, who was really the head of the French government, had been even more keenly galled. She had attempted, by the most delicate flattery, to propitiate the King of Prussia, but her messages had drawn from him only dry and sarcastic replies. The Empress-Queen took a very different course. Though the haughtiest of princesses, though the most austere of matrons, she forgot in her thirst for revenge both the dignity of her race and the purity of her character, and condescended to flatter the low-born and low-minded concubine, who, having acquired influence by prostituting herself, retained it by prostituting others. Maria Theresa actually wrote with her own hand a note, full of expressions of esteem and friendship, to her dear cousin, the daughter of the butcher Poisson, the wife of the publican D'Etioles, the kidnapper of young girls for the *Parc-aux-cerfs*—a strange cousin for the descendant of so many Emperors of the West! The mistress was completely gained over, and easily carried her point with Louis, who had, indeed, wrongs of his own to resent. His feelings were not quick; but contempt, says the eastern proverb, pierces even through the shell of the tortoise; and neither prudence nor decorum had ever restrained Frederic from expressing his measureless contempt for the sloth, the imbecility, and the baseness of Louis. France was thus induced to join the coalition; and

the example of France determined the conduct of Sweden, then completely subject to French influence.

The enemies of Frederick were surely strong enough to attack him openly; but they were desirous to add to all their other advantages the advantage of a surprise. He was not, however, a man to be taken off his guard. He had tools in every court; and he now received from Vienna, from Dresden, and from Paris, accounts so circumstantial and so consistent, that he could not doubt of his danger. He learnt that he was to be assailed at once by France, Austria, Russia, Saxony, Sweden, and the Germanic body; that the greater part of his dominions was to be portioned out amongst his enemies; that France, which from her geographical position could not directly share in his spoils, was to receive an equivalent in the Netherlands; that Austria was to have Silesia, and the Czarina East Prussia; that Augustus of Saxony expected Magdeburg; and that Sweden would be rewarded with part of Pomerania. If these designs succeeded, the house of Brandenburg would at once sink in the European system to a place lower than that of the Duke of Wurtemburg or the Margrave of Baden.

And what hope was there that these designs would fail? No such union of the continental powers had been seen for ages. A less formidable confederacy had in a week conquered all the provinces of Venice, when Venice was at the height of power, wealth, and glory. A less formidable confederacy had compelled Louis the Fourteenth to bow down his haughty head to the very earth. A less formidable confederacy has, within our own memory, subjugated a still mightier empire, and abased a still prouder name. Such odds had never been heard of in war. The people whom Frederic ruled were not five millions. The population of the countries which were leagued against him amounted to a hundred millions. The disproportion in wealth was at least equally great. Small communities,

actuated by strong sentiments of patriotism or loyalty, have sometimes made head against great monarchies weakened by factions and discontents. But small as was Frederic's kingdom, it probably contained a greater number of disaffected subjects than were to be found in all the states of his enemies. Silesia formed a fourth part of his dominions; and from the Silesians, born under the Austrian princes, the utmost that he could expect was apathy. From the Silesian Catholics he could hardly expect anything but resistance.

Some states have been enabled, by their geographical position, to defend themselves with advantage against immense force. The sea has repeatedly protected England against the fury of the whole Continent. The Venetian government, driven from its possessions on the land, could still bid defiance to the confederates of Cambray from the Arsenal amidst the lagoons. More than one great and well-appointed army, which regarded the shepherds of Switzerland as an easy prey, has perished in the passes of the Alps. Frederic had no such advantage. The form of his states, their situation, the nature of the ground, all were against him. His long, scattered, straggling territory, seemed to have been shaped with an express view to the convenience of invaders, and was protected by no sea, by no chain of hills. Scarcely any corner of it was a week's march from the territory of the enemy. The capital itself, in the event of war, would be constantly exposed to insult. In truth, there was hardly a politician or a soldier in Europe who doubted that the conflict would be terminated in a very few days by the prostration of the house of Brandenburg.

Nor was Frederic's own opinion very different. He anticipated nothing short of his own ruin, and of the ruin of his family. Yet there was still a chance, a slender chance, of escape. His states had at least the advantage

of a central position; his enemies were widely separated from each other, and could not conveniently unite their overwhelming forces on one point. They inhabited different climates, and it was probable that the season of the year which would be best suited to the military operations of one portion of the league, would be unfavourable to those of another portion. The Prussian monarchy, too, was free from some infirmities which were found in empires far more extensive and magnificent. Its effective strength for a desperate struggle was not to be measured merely by the number of square miles or the number of people. In that spare but well-knit and well-exercised body, there was nothing but sinew, and muscle, and bone. No public creditors looked for dividends. No distant colonies required defence. No court, filled with flatterers and mistresses, devoured the pay of fifty battalions. The Prussian army, though far inferior in number to the troops which were about to be opposed to it, was yet strong out all proportion to the extent of the Prussian dominions. It was also admirably trained and admirably officered, accustomed to obey and accustomed to conquer. The revenue was not only unincumbered by debt, but exceeded the ordinary outlay in time of peace. Alone of all the European princes, Frederic had a treasure laid up for a day of difficulty. Above all, he was one, and his enemies were many. In their camps would certainly be found the jealousy, the dissension, the slackness inseparable from coalitions; on his side was the energy, the unity, the secrecy of a strong dictatorship. To a certain extent the deficiency of military means might be supplied by the resources of military art. Small as the king's army was, when compared with the six hundred thousand men whom the confederates could bring into the field, celerity of movement might in some degree compensate for deficiency of bulk. It was thus just possible that genius, judgment, resolution,

and good luck united, might protract the struggle during a campaign or two; and to gain even a month was of importance. It could not be long before the vices which are found in all extensive confederacies would begin to show themselves. Every member of the league would think his own share of the war too large, and his own share of the spoils too small. Complaints and recrimination would abound. The Turk might stir on the Danube; the statesmen of France might discover the error which they had committed in abandoning the fundamental principles of their national policy. Above all, death might rid Prussia of its most formidable enemies. The war was the effect of the personal aversion with which three or four sovereigns regarded Frederic; and the decease of any of those sovereigns might produce a complete revolution in the state of Europe.

In the midst of an horizon generally dark and stormy, Frederic could discern one bright spot. The peace which had been concluded between England and France in 1748, had been in Europe no more than an armistice; and had not even been an armistice in the other quarters of the globe. In India the sovereignty of the Carnatic was disputed between two great Mussulman houses; Fort Saint George had taken the one side, Pondicherry the other; and in a series of battles and sieges the troops of Lawrence and Clive had been opposed to those of Dupleix. A struggle less important in its consequences, but not less likly to produce immediate irritation, was carried on between those French and English adventurers, who kidnapped negroes and collected gold dust on the coast of Guinea. But it was in North America that the emulation and mutual aversion of the two nations were most conspicuous. The French attempted to hem in the English colonists by a chain of military posts, extending from the Great Lakes to the mouth of the Mississippi. The English took arms. The wild

aboriginal tribes appeared on each side mingled with the "Pale Faces." Battles were fought; forts were stormed; and hideous stories about stakes, scalpings, and death-songs reached Europe, and inflamed that national animosity which the rivalry of ages had produced. The disputes between France and England came to a crisis at the very time when the tempest which had been gathering was about to burst on Prussia. The tastes and interests of Frederic would have led him, if he had been allowed an option, to side with the house of Bourbon. But the folly of the Court of Versailles left him no choice. France became the tool of Austria, and Frederic was forced to become the ally of England. He could not, indeed, expect that a power which covered the sea with its fleets, and which had to make war at once on the Ohio and the Ganges, would be able to spare a large number of troops for operations in Germany. But England, though poor compared with the England of our time, was far richer than any country on the Continent. The amount of her revenue, and the resources which she found in her credit, though they may be thought small by a generation which has seen her raise a hundred and thirty millions in a single year, appeared miraculous to the politicians of that age. A very moderate portion of her wealth, expended by an able and economical prince, in a country where prices were low, would be sufficient to equip and maintain a formidable army.

Such was the situation in which Frederic found himself. He saw the whole extent of his peril. He saw that there was still a faint possibility of escape; and, with prudent temerity, he determined to strike the first blow. It was in the month of August, 1756, that the great war of the Seven Years commenced. The king demanded of the Empress-Queen a distinct explanation of her intentions, and plainly told her that he should consider a refusal as a declaration of war. "I want," he said, "no answer in the style of an

oracle." He received an answer at once haughty and evasive. In an instant, the rich electorate of Saxony was overflowed by sixty thousand Prussian troops. Augustus with his army occupied a strong position at Pirna. The Queen of Poland was at Dresden. In a few days Pirna was blockaded and Dresden was taken. The object of Frederic was to obtain possession of the Saxon State Papers; for those papers, he well knew, contained ample proofs that though apparently an aggressor, he was really acting in self-defence. The Queen of Poland, as well acquainted as Frederic with the importance of those documents, had packed them up, had concealed them in her bed-chamber, and was about to send them off to Warsaw, when a Prussian officer made his appearance. In the hope that no soldier would venture to outrage a lady, a queen, a daughter of an emperor, the mother-in-law of a dauphin, she placed herself before the trunk, and at length sat down on it. But all resistance was vain. The papers were carried to Frederic, who found in them, as he expected, abundant evidence of the designs of the coalition. The most important documents were instantly published, and the effect of the publication was great. It was clear that, of whatever sins the king of Prussia might formerly have been guilty, he was now the injured party, and had merely anticipated a blow intended to destroy him.

The Saxon camp at Pirna was in the mean time closely invested; but the besieged were not without hopes of succour. A great Austrian army under Marshal Brown was about to pour through the passes which separate Bohemia from Saxony. Frederic left at Pirna a force sufficient to deal with the Saxons, hastened into Bohemia, encountered Brown at Lowositz, and defeated him. This battle decided the fate of Saxony. Augustus and his favourite, Buhl, fled to Poland. The whole army of the electorate capitulated. From that time till the end of the war, Frederic

treated Saxony as a part of his dominions, or, rather, he acted towards the Saxons in a manner which may serve to illustrate the whole meaning of that tremendous sentence—*subjectos tanquam suos, viles tanquam alienos.* Saxony was as much in his power as Brandenburg; and he had no such interest in the welfare of Saxony as he had in the welfare of Brandenburg. He accordingly levied troops and exacted contributions throughout the enslaved province, with far more rigour than in any part of his own dominions. Seventeen thousand men who had been in the camp of Pirna were half compelled, half persuaded, to enlist under their conqueror. Thus, within a few weeks from the commencement of hostilities, one of the confederates had been disarmed, and his weapons pointed against the rest.

The winter put a stop to military operations. All had hitherto gone well. But the real tug of war was still to come. It was easy to foresee that the year 1757 would be a memorable era in the history of Europe.

The scheme for the campaign was simple, bold, and judicious. The Duke of Cumberland with an English and Hanoverian army was in Western Germany, and might be able to prevent the French troops from attacking Prussia. The Russians, confined by their snows, would probably not stir till the spring was far advanced. Saxony was prostrated. Sweden could do nothing very important. During a few months Frederic would have to deal with Austria alone. Even thus the odds were against him. But ability and courage have often triumphed against odds still more formidable.

Early in 1757 the Prussian army in Saxony began to move. Through four defiles in the mountains they came pouring into Bohemia. Prague was his first mark; but the ulterior object was probably Vienna. At Prague lay Marshal Brown with one great army. Daun, the most

cautious and fortunate of the Austrian captains, was advancing with another. Frederic determined to overwhelm Brown before Daun should arrive. On the sixth of May was fought, under those walls which, a hundred and thirty years before, had witnessed the victory of the Catholic league and the flight of the unhappy Palatine, a battle more bloody than any which Europe saw during the long interval between Malplaquet and Eylau. The King and Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick were distinguished on that day by their valour and exertions. But the chief glory was with Schwerin. When the Prussian infantry wavered, the stout old marshal snatched the colours from an ensign, and, waving them in the air, led back his regiment to the charge. Thus at seventy-two years of age, he fell in the thickest battle, still grasping the standard which bears the black eagle on the field argent. The victory remained with the King. But it had been dearly purchased. Whole columns of his bravest warriors had fallen. He admitted that he had lost eighteen thousand men. Of the enemy, twenty-four thousand had been killed, wounded, or taken.

Part of the defeated army was shut up in Prague. Part fled to join the troops which, under the command of Daun, were now close at hand. Frederic determined to play over the same game which had succeeded at Lowositz. He left a large force to besiege Prague, and at the head of thirty thousand men he marched against Daun. The cautious Marshal, though he had a great superiority in numbers, would risk nothing. He occupied at Kolin a position almost impregnable, and awaited the attack of the King.

It was the 18th of June—a day which, if the Greek superstition still retained its influence, would be held sacred to Nemesis—a day on which the two greatest princes and soldiers of modern times were taught, by a terrible experience, that neither skill nor valour can fix the inconstancy of fortune. The battle began before noon; and part of the

Prussian army maintained the contest till after the midsummer sun had gone down. But at length the King found that his troops, having been repeatedly driven back with frightful carnage, could no longer be led to the charge. He was with difficulty persuaded to quit the field. The officers of his personal staff were under the necessity of expostulating with him, and one of them took the liberty to say, "Does your Majesty mean to storm the batteries alone?" Thirteen thousand of his bravest followers had perished. Nothing remained for him but to retreat in good order, to raise the siege of Prague, and to hurry his army by different routes out of Bohemia.

This stroke seemed to be final. Frederic's situation had at best been such, that only an uninterrupted run of good-luck could save him, as it seemed, from ruin. And now, almost in the outset of the contest, he had met with a check which, even in a war between equal powers, would have been felt as serious. He had owed much to the opinion which all Europe entertained of his army. Since his accession, his soldiers had in many successive battles been victorious over the Austrians. But the glory had departed from his arms. All whom his malevolent sarcasms had wounded, made haste to avenge themselves by scoffing at the scoffer. His soldiers had ceased to confide in his star. In every part of his camp his dispositions were severely criticised. Even in his own family he had detractors. His next brother William, heir-presumptive, or rather, in truth, heir-apparent to the throne, and great-grandfather of the present king, could not refrain from lamenting his own fate and that of the house of Hohenzollern, once so great and so prosperous, but now, by the rash ambition of its chief, made a byword to all nations. These complaints, and some blunders which William committed during the retreat from Bohemia, called forth the bitter displeasure of the inexorable king. The prince's heart was broken by the

cutting reproaches of his brother; he quitted the army, retired to a country seat, and in a short time died of shame and vexation.

It seemed that the king's distress could hardly be increased. Yet at this moment another blow not less terrible than that of Kolin fell upon him. The French under Marshal D'Estrées had invaded Germany. The Duke of Cumberland had given them battle at Hastembeck, and had been defeated. In order to save the Electorate of Hanover from entire subjugation, he had made, at Closter Severn, an arrangement with the French generals, which left them at liberty to turn their arms against the Prussian dominions.

That nothing might be wanting to Frederic's distress, he lost his mother just at this time; and he appears to have felt the loss more than was to be expected from the hardness and severity of his character. In truth, his misfortunes had now cut to the quick. The mocker, the tyrant, the most rigorous, the most imperious, the most cynical of men, was very unhappy. His face was so haggard and his form so thin, that when on his return from Bohemia he passed through Leipsic, the people hardly knew him again. His sleep was broken; the tears, in spite of himself, often started into his eyes; and the grave began to present itself to his agitated mind as the best refuge from misery and dishonour. His resolution was fixed never to be taken alive, and never to make peace on condition of descending from his place among the powers of Europe. He saw nothing left for him except to die; and he deliberately chose his mode of death. He always carried about with him a sure and speedy poison in a small glass case; and to the few in whom he placed confidence, he made no mystery of his resolution.

But we should very imperfectly describe the state of Frederic's mind, if we left out of view the laughable pecu-

liarities which contrasted so singularly with the gravity, energy, and harshness of his character. It is difficult to say whether the tragic or the comic predominated in the strange scene which was then acted. In the midst of all the great king's calamities, his passion for writing indifferent poetry grew stronger and stronger. Enemies all around him, despair in his heart, pills of corrosive sublimate hidden in his clothes, he poured forth hundreds upon hundreds of lines, hateful to gods and men—the insipid dregs of Voltaire's Hippocrene—the faint echo of the lyre of Chaulieu. It is amusing to compare what he did during the last months of 1757, with what he wrote during the same time. It may be doubted whether any equal portion of the life of Hannibal, of Cæsar, or of Napoleon, will bear a comparison with that short period, the most brilliant in the history of Prussia and of Frederic. Yet at this very time the scanty leisure of the illustrious warrior was employed in producing odes and epistles, a little better than Cibber's, and a little worse than Hayley's. Here and there a manly sentiment which deserves to be in prose, makes its appearance in company with Prometheus and Orpheus, Elysium and Acheron, the plaintive Philomel, the poppies of Morpheus, and all the other frippery which, like a robe tossed by a proud beauty to her waiting-woman, has long been contemptuously abandoned by genius to mediocrity. We hardly know any instance of the strength and weakness of human nature so striking, and so grotesque, as the character of this haughty, vigilant, resolute, sagacious blue-stocking, half Mithridates and half Trissotin, bearing up against a world in arms, with an ounce of poison in one pocket and a quire of bad verses in the other!

Frederic had some time before made advances towards a reconciliation with Voltaire; and some civil letters had passed between them. After the battle of Kolin their epis-

tolary intercourse became, at least in seeming, friendly and confidential. We do not know any collection of Letters which throw so much light on the darkest and most intricate parts of human nature, as the correspondence of these strange beings after they had exchanged forgiveness. Both felt that the quarrel had lowered them in the public estimation. They admired each other. They stood in need of each other. The great King wished to be handed down to posterity by the great Writer. The great Writer felt himself exalted by the homage of the great King. Yet the wounds which they had inflicted on each other were too deep to be effaced, or even perfectly healed. Not only did the scars remain; the sore places often festered and bled afresh.

The letters consisted for the most part of compliments, thanks, offers of service, assurances of attachment. But if anything brought back to Frederic's recollection the cunning and mischievous pranks by which Voltaire had provoked him, some expression of contempt and displeasure broke forth in the midst of his eulogy. It was much worse when anything recalled to the mind of Voltaire the outrages which he and his kinswoman had suffered at Frankfort. All at once his flowing panegyric is turned into invective. "Remember how you behaved to me. For your sake I have lost the favour of my king. For your sake I am an exile from my country. I loved you. I trusted myself to you. I had no wish but to end my life in your service. And what was my reward? Stripped of all you had bestowed on me, the key, the order, the pension, I was forced to fly from your territories. I was hunted as if I had been a deserter from your grenadiers. I was arrested, insulted, plundered. My niece was dragged in the mud of Frankfort by your soldiers, as if she had been some wretched follower of your camp. You have great talents. You have good qualities. But you have one odious vice. You delight

in the abasement of your fellow creatures. You have brought disgrace on the name of philosopher. You have given some colour to the slanders of the bigots, who say that no confidence can be placed in the justice or humanity of those who reject the Christian faith." Then the King answers with less heat, but with equal severity—"You know that you behaved shamefully in Prussia. It is well for you that you had to deal with a man so indulgent to the infirmities of genius as I am. You richly deserved to see the inside of a dungeon. Your talents are not more widely known than your faithlessness and your malevolence. The grave itself is no asylum from your spite. Maupertuis is dead; but you still go on calumniating and deriding him, as if you had not made him miserable enough while he was living. Let us have no more of this. And, above all, let me hear no more of your niece. I am sick to death of her name. I can bear with your faults for the sake of your merits; but she has not written *Mahomet* or *Merope*."

An explosion of this kind, it might be supposed, would necessarily put an end to all amicable communication. But it was not so. After every outbreak of ill humour this extraordinary pair became more loving than before, and exchanged compliments and assurances of mutual regard with a wonderful air of sincerity.

It may well be supposed that men who wrote thus to each other, were not very guarded in what they said of each other. The English ambassador, Mitchell, who knew that the King of Prussia was constantly writing to Voltaire, with the greatest freedom on the most important subjects, was amazed to hear his majesty designate this highly favoured correspondent as a bad-hearted fellow, the greatest rascal on the face of the earth. And the language which the poet held about the king was not much more respectful.

It would probably have puzzled Voltaire himself to say

what was his real feeling towards Frederic. It was compounded of all sentiments, from enmity to friendship, and from scorn to admiration; and the proportions in which these elements were mixed, changed every moment. The old patriarch resembled the spoiled child who screams, stamps, cuffs, laughs, kisses, and cuddles within one quarter of an hour. His resentment was not extinguished; yet he was not without sympathy for his old friend. As a Frenchman, he wished success to the arms of his country. As a philosopher, he was anxious for the stability of a throne on which a philosopher sat. He longed both to save and to humble Frederic. There was one way, and only one, in which all his conflicting feelings could at once be gratified. If Frederic were preserved by the interference of France, if it were known that for that interference he was indebted to the mediation of Voltaire, this would indeed be delicious revenge; this would indeed be to heap coals of fire on that haughty head. Nor did the vain and restless poet think it impossible that he might, from his hermitage near the Alps, dictate peace to Europe. D'Estrées had quitted Hanover, and the command of the French army had been entrusted to the Duke of Richelieu, a man whose chief distinction was derived from his success in gallantry. Richelieu was in truth the most eminent of that race of seducers by profession, who furnished Crébillon the younger and La Clos with models for their heroes. In his earlier days the royal house itself had not been secure from his presumptuous love. He was believed to have carried his conquests into the family of Orleans; and some suspected that he was not unconcerned in the mysterious remorse which embittered the last hours of the charming mother of Louis the Fifteenth. But the Duke was now fifty years old. With a heart deeply corrupted by vice, a head long accustomed to think only on trifles, an impaired constitution, an impaired fortune, and worst of

all, a very red nose, he was entering on a dull, frivolous, and unrespected old age. Without one qualification for military command, except that personal courage, which was common to him and the whole nobility of France, he had been placed at the head of the army of Hanover; and in that situation he did his best to repair, by extortion and corruption, the injury which he had done to his property by a life of dissolute profusion.

The Duke of Richelieu to the end of his life hated the philosophers as a sect—not for those parts of their system which a good and wise man would have condemned—but for their virtues, for their spirit of free inquiry, and for their hatred of those social abuses of which he was himself the personification. But he, like many of those who thought with him, excepted Voltaire from the list of proscribed writers. He frequently sent flattering letters to Ferney. He did the patriarch the honour to borrow money of him, and even carried his condescending friendship so far as to forget to pay interest. Voltaire thought that it might be in his power to bring the Duke and the King of Prussia into communication with each other. He wrote earnestly to both; and he so far succeeded that a correspondence between them was commenced.

But it was to very different means that Frederic was to owe his deliverance. At the beginning of November, the net seemed to have closed completely round him. The Russians were in the field, and were spreading devastation through his eastern provinces. Silesia was overrun by the Austrians. A great French army was advancing from the west under the command of Marshal Soubise, a prince of the great Armorican house of Rohan. Berlin itself had been taken and plundered by the Croatians. Such was the situation from which Frederic extricated himself, with dazzling glory, in the short space of thirty days.

He marched first against Soubise. On the fifth of No-

vember the armies met at Rosbach. The French were two to one; but they were ill-disciplined, and their general was a dunce. The tactics of Frederic, and the well-regulated valour of the Prussian troops, obtained a complete victory. Seven thousand of the invaders were made prisoners. Their guns, their colours, their baggage, fell into the hands of the conquerors. Those who escaped fled as confusedly as a mob scattered by cavalry. Victorious in the West, the king turned his arms towards Silesia. In that quarter everything seemed to be lost. Breslau had fallen; and Charles of Lorraine, with a mighty power, held the whole province. On the fifth of December, exactly one month after the battle of Rosbach, Frederic, with forty thousand men, and Prince Charles, at the head of not less than sixty thousand, met at Leuthen, hard by Breslau. The King, who was, in general, perhaps too much inclined to consider the common soldier as a mere machine, resorted, on this great day, to means resembling those which Bonaparte afterwards employed with such signal success for the purpose of stimulating military enthusiasm. The principal officers were convoked. Frederic addressed them with great force and pathos; and directed them to speak to their men as he had spoken to them. When the armies were set in battle array, the Prussian troops were in a state of fierce excitement; but their excitement showed itself after the fashion of a grave people. The columns advanced to the attack chanting, to the sound of drums and fifes, the rude hymns of the old Saxon Herhholds. They had never fought so well; nor had the genius of their chief ever been so conspicuous. "That battle," said Napoleon, "was a masterpiece. Of itself it is sufficient to entitle Frederic to a place in the first rank among generals." The victory was complete. Twenty-seven thousand Austrians were killed, wounded, or taken; fifty stand of colours, a hundred guns, four thousand waggons, fell into the hands

of the Prussians. Breslau opened its gates; Silesia was reconquered; Charles of Lorraine retired to hide his shame and sorrow at Brussels; and Frederic allowed his troops to take some repose in winter quarters, after a campaign, to the vicissitudes of which it will be difficult to find any parallel in ancient or modern history.

The King's fame filled all the world. He had, during the last year, maintained a contest, on terms of advantage, against three powers, the weakest of which had more than three times his resources. He had fought four great pitched battles against superior forces. Three of these battles he had gained; and the defeat of Kolin, repaired as it had been, rather raised than lowered his military renown. The victory of Leuthen is, to this day, the proudest on the roll of Prussian fame. Leipsic, indeed, and Waterloo, produced consequences more important to mankind. But the glory of Leipsic must be shared by the Prussians with the Austrians and Russians; and at Waterloo the British infantry bore the burden and heat of the day. The victory of of Rosbach was, in a military point of view, less honourable than that of Leuthen; for it was gained over an incapable general and a disorganised army. But the moral effect which it produced was immense. All the preceding triumphs of Frederic had been triumphs over Germans, and could excite no emotions of national pride among the German people. It was impossible that a Hessian or a Hanoverian could feel any patriotic exultation at hearing that Pomeranians slaughtered Moravians, or that Saxon banners had been hung in the churches of Berlin. Indeed, though the military character of the Germans justly stood high throughout the world, they could boast of no great day which belonged to them as a people;—of no Agincourt, of no Bannockburn. Most of their victories had been gained over each other; and their most splendid exploits

against foreigners had been achieved under the command of Eugene, who was himself a foreigner.

The news of the battle of Rosbach stirred the blood of the whole of the mighty population from the Alps to the Baltic, and from the borders of Courland to those of Lorraine. Westphalia and Lower Saxony had been deluged by a great host of strangers, whose speech was unintelligible, and whose petulant and licentious manners had excited the strongest feelings of disgust and hatred. That great host had been put to flight by a small band of German warriors, led by a prince of German blood on the side of father and mother, and marked by the fair hair and the clear blue eye of Germany. Never since the dissolution of the empire of Charlemagne, had the Teutonic race won such a field against the French. The tidings called forth a general burst of delight and pride from the whole of the great family which spoke the various dialects of the ancient language of Arminius. The fame of Frederic began to supply, in some degree, the place of a common government and of a common capital. It became a rallying point for all true Germans—a subject of mutual congratulation to the Bavarian and the Westphalian, to the citizen of Frankfort and the citizen of Nuremburg. Then first it was manifest that the Germans were truly a nation. Then first was discernible that patriotic spirit which, in 1813, achieved the great deliverance of central Europe, and which still guards, and long will guard, against foreign ambition, the old freedom of the Rhine.

Nor were the effects produced by that celebrated day merely political. The greatest masters of German poetry and eloquence have admitted that, though the great King neither valued nor understood his native language, though he looked on France as the only seat of taste and philosophy; yet, in his own despite, he did much to emancipate the genius of his countrymen from the foreign yoke; and

that, in the act of vanquishing Soubise, he was, unintentionally, rousing the spirit which soon began to question the literary precedence of Boileau and Voltaire. So strangely do events confound all the plans of man. A prince who read only French, who wrote only French, who ranked as a French classic, became, quite unconsciously, the means of liberating half the Continent from the dominion of that French criticism, of which he was himself, to the end of his life, a slave. Yet even the enthusiasm of Germany in favour of Frederic, hardly equalled the enthusiasm of England. The birth-day of our ally was celebrated with as much enthusiasm as that of our own sovereign; and at night the streets of London were in a blaze with illuminations. Portraits of the Hero of Rosbach, with his cocked hat and long pig-tail, were in every house. An attentive observer will, at this day, find in the parlours of old-fashioned inns, and in the portfolios of print-sellers, twenty portraits of Frederic for one of George II. The sign-painters were everywhere employed in touching up Admiral Vernon into the King of Prussia. Some young Englishmen of rank proposed to visit Germany as volunteers, for the purpose of learning the art of war under the greatest of commanders. This last proof of British attachment and admiration, Frederic politely but firmly declined. His camp was no place for amateur students of military science. The Prussian discipline was rigorous even to cruelty. The officers, while in the field, were expected to practise an abstemiousness and self-denial such as was hardly surpassed by the most rigid monastic orders. However noble their birth, however high their rank in the service, they were not permitted to eat from anything better than pewter. It was a high crime even in a count and field-marshal to have a single silver spoon among his baggage. Gay young Englishmen of twenty thousand a year, accustomed to liberty and to luxury, would not easily submit to these Spartan re-

straints. The King could not venture to keep them in order as he kept his own subjects in order. Situated as he was with respect to England, he could not well imprison or shoot refractory Howards and Cavendishes. On the other hand, the example of a few fine gentlemen, attended by chariots and livery servants, eating in plate, and drinking champagne and tokay, was enough to corrupt his whole army. He thought it best to make a stand at first, and civilly refused to admit such dangerous companions among his troops.

The help of England was bestowed in a manner far more useful and more acceptable. An annual subsidy of near seven hundred thousand pounds enabled the King to add probably more than fifty thousand men to his army. Pitt, now at the height of power and popularity, undertook the task of defending Western Germany against France, and asked Frederic only for the loan of a general. The general selected was Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick who had attained high distinction in the Prussian service. He was put at the head of an army, partly English, partly Hanoverian, partly composed of mercenaries hired from the petty princes of the empire. He soon vindicated the choice of the two allied courts, and proved himself the second general of the age.

Frederic passed the winter at Breslau, in reading, writing, and preparing for the next campaign. The havoc which the war had made among his troops was rapidly repaired; and in the spring of 1758 he was again ready for the conflict. Prince Ferdinand kept the French in check. The King in the mean time, after attempting against the Austrians some operations which led to no very important result, marched to encounter the Russians, who, slaying, burning, and wasting wherever they turned, had penetrated into the heart of his realm. He gave them battle at Zorndorf, near Frankfort on the Oder. The fight was long and

bloody. Quarter was neither given nor taken; for the Germans and Scythians regarded each other with bitter aversion, and the sight of the ravages committed by the half savage invaders had incensed the King and his army. The Russians were overthrown with great slaughter, and for a few months no further danger was to be apprehended from the east.

A day of thanksgiving was proclaimed by the King, and was celebrated with pride and delight by his people. The rejoicings in England were not less enthusiastic or less sincere. This may be selected as the point of time at which the military glory of Frederic reached the zenith. In the short space of three-quarters of a year he had won three great battles over the armies of three mighty and warlike monarchies—France, Austria, and Russia.

But it was decreed that the temper of that strong mind should be tried by both extremes of fortune in rapid succession. Close upon this bright series of triumphs came a series of disasters, such as would have blighted the fame and broken the heart of almost any other commander. Yet Frederic, in the midst of his calamities, was still an object of admiration to his subjects, his allies, and his enemies. Overwhelmed by adversity, sick of life, he still maintained the contest—greater in defeat, in flight, and in what seemed hopeless ruin, than on the fields of his proudest victories.

Having vanquished the Russians, he hastened into Saxony to oppose the troops of the Empress-Queen, commanded by Daun, the most cautious, and Laudohn, the most inventive and enterprising of her generals. These two celebrated commanders agreed on a scheme, in which the prudence of the one and the vigour of the other seem to have happily combined. At dead of night they surprised the king in his camp at Hochkirchen. His presence of mind saved his troops from destruction; but nothing could save them from defeat and severe loss. Marshal Keith was among the slain.

The first roar of the guns roused the noble exile from his rest, and he was instantly in the front of the battle. He received a dangerous wound, but refused to quit the field, and was in the act of rallying his broken troops, when an Austrian bullet terminated his chequered and eventful life.

The misfortune was serious. But of all generals Frederic understood best how to repair defeat, and Daun understood least how to improve victory. In a few days the Prussian army was as formidable as before the battle. The prospect was, however, gloomy. An Austrian army under General Harsch had invaded Silesia, and invested the fortress of Neisse. Daun, after his success at Hochkirchen, had written to Harsch in very confident terms:—"Go on with your operations against Neisse. Be quite at ease as to the King. I will give you a good account of him." In truth, the position of the Prussians was full of difficulties. Between them and Silesia lay the victorious army of Daun. It was not easy for them to reach Silesia at all. If they did reach it, they left Saxony exposed to the Austrians. But the vigour and activity of Frederic surmounted every obstacle. He made a circuitous march of extraordinary rapidity, passed Daun, hastened into Silesia, raised the siege of Neisse, and drove Harsch into Bohemia. Daun availed himself of the King's absence to attack Dresden. The Prussians defended it desperately. The inhabitants of that wealthy and polished capital begged in vain for mercy from the garrison within, and from the besiegers without. The beautiful suburbs were burned to the ground. It was clear that the town, if won at all, would be won street by street by the bayonet. At this conjuncture came news, that Frederic, having cleared Silesia of his enemies, was returning by forced marches into Saxony. Daun retired from before Dresden, and fell back into the Austrian territories. The King, over heaps of ruins, made his triumphant entry into the unhappy metropolis, which had so cruelly expiated the

weak and perfidious policy of its sovereign. It was now the 20th of November. The cold weather suspended military operations; and the King again took up his winter quarters at Breslau.

The third of the seven terrible years was over; and Frederic still stood his ground. He had been recently tried by domestic as well as by military disasters. On the 14th of October, the day on which he was defeated at Hochkirchen, the day on the anniversary of which, forty-eight years later, a defeat far more tremendous laid the Prussian monarchy in the dust, died Wilhelmina, Margravine of Bareuth. From the portraits which we have of her, by her own hand, and by the hands of the most discerning of her contemporaries, we should pronounce her to have been coarse, indelicate, and a good hater, but not destitute of kind and generous feelings. Her mind, naturally strong and observant, had been highly cultivated; and she was, and deserved to be, Frederic's favourite sister. He felt the loss as much as it was in his iron nature to feel the loss of any thing but a province or a battle.

At Breslau, during the winter, he was indefatigable in his poetical labours. The most spirited lines, perhaps, that he ever wrote, are to be found in a bitter lampoon on Louis and Madame de Pompadour, which he composed at this time, and sent to Voltaire. The verses were, indeed, so good, that Voltaire was afraid that he might himself be suspected of having written them, or at least of having corrected them; and partly from fright—partly, we fear, from love of mischief—sent them to the Duke of Choiseul, then prime minister of France. Choiseul very wisely determined to encounter Frederic at Frederic's own weapons, and applied for assistance to Palissot, who had some skill as a versifier, and who, though he had not yet made himself famous by bringing Rousseau and Helvetius on the stage, was known to possess some little talent for satire. Palissot produced

some very stinging lines on the moral and literary character of Frederic, and these lines the duke sent to Voltaire. This war of couplets, following close on the carnage of Zorndorf and the conflagration of Dresden, illustrates well the strangely compounded character of the King of Prussia.

At this moment he was assailed by a new enemy. Benedict XIV., the best and wisest of the two hundred and fifty successors of St. Peter, was no more. During the short interval between his reign and that of his disciple Ganganelli, the chief seat in the Church of Rome was filled by Rezzonico, who took the name of Clement XIII. This absurd priest determined to try what the weight of his authority could effect in favour of the orthodox Maria Theresa against a heretic king. At the high mass on Christmas-day, a sword with a rich belt and scabbard, a hat of crimson velvet lined with ermine, and a dove of pearls, the mystic symbol of the Divine Comforter, were solemnly blessed by the supreme pontiff, and were sent with great ceremony to Marshal Daun, the conqueror of Kolin and Hochkirchen. This mark of favour had more than once been bestowed by the Popes on the great champions of the faith. Similar honours had been paid, more than six centuries earlier, by Urban II. to Godfrey of Bouillon. Similar honours had been conferred on Alba for destroying the liberties of the Low Countries, and on John Sobiesky after the deliverance of Vienna. But the presents which were received with profound reverence by the Baron of the Holy Sepulchre in the eleventh century, and which had not wholly lost their value even in the seventeenth century, appeared inexpressibly ridiculous to a generation which read Montesquieu and Voltaire. Frederic wrote sarcastic verses on the gifts, the giver, and the receiver. But the public wanted no prompter; and an universal roar of laughter from Petersburg to Lisbon, reminded the Vatican that the age of crusades was over.

The fourth campaign, the most disastrous of all the cam-

paigns of this fearful war, had now opened. The Austrians filled Saxony, and menaced Berlin. The Russians defeated the King's generals on the Oder, threatened Silesia, effected a junction with Laudohn, and intrenched themselves strongly at Kunersdorf. Frederic hastened to attack them. A great battle was fought. During the earlier part of the day everything yielded to the impetuosity of the Prussians, and to the skill of their chief. The lines were forced. Half the Russian guns were taken. The king sent off a courier to Berlin with two lines, announcing a complete victory. But, in the mean time, the stubborn Russians, defeated yet unbroken, had taken up their stand in an almost impregnable position, on an eminence where the Jews of Frankfort were wont to bury their dead. Here the battle recommenced. The Prussian infantry, exhausted by six hours of hard fighting under a sun which equalled the tropical heat, were yet brought up repeatedly to the attack, but in vain. The King led three charges in person. Two horses were killed under him. The officers of his staff fell all round him. His coat was pierced by several bullets. All was in vain. His infantry was driven back with frightful slaughter. Terror began to spread fast from man to man. At that moment, the fiery cavalry of Laudohn, still fresh, rushed on the wavering ranks. Then followed an universal rout. Frederic himself was on the point of falling into the hands of the conquerors, and was with difficulty saved by a gallant officer, who, at the head of a handful of Hussars, made good a diversion of a few minutes. Shattered in body, shattered in mind, the king reached that night a village which the Cossacks had plundered; and there, in a ruined and deserted farm-house, flung himself on a heap of straw. He had sent to Berlin a second despatch very different from his first:—"Let the royal family leave Berlin. Send the archives to Potsdam. The town may make terms with the enemy."

The defeat was, in truth, overwhelming. Of fifty thousand men, who had that morning marched under the black eagles, not three thousand remained together. The king bethought him again of his corrosive sublimate, and wrote to bid adieu to his friends, and to give directions as to the measures to be taken in the event of his death:—"I have no resource left"—such is the language of one of his letters—"all is lost. I will not survive the ruin of my country. Farewell for ever."

But the mutual jealousies of the confederates prevented them from following up their victory. They lost a few days in loitering and squabbling; and a few days, improved by Frederic, were worth more than the years of other men. On the morning after the battle, he had got together eighteen thousand of his troops. Very soon his force amounted to thirty thousand. Guns were procured from the neighbouring fortresses; and there was again an army. Berlin was for the present safe; but calamities came pouring on the King in uninterrupted succession. One of his generals, with a large body of troops, was taken at Maxen; another was defeated at Meissen: and when at length the campaign of 1759 closed, in the midst of a rigorous winter, the situation of Prussia appeared desperate. The only consoling circumstance was, that, in the West, Ferdinand of Brunswick had been more fortunate than his master; and by a series of exploits, of which the battle of Minden was the most glorious, had removed all apprehension of danger on the side of France.

The fifth year was now about to commence. It seemed impossible that the Prussian territories, repeatedly devastated by hundreds of thousands of invaders, could longer support the contest. But the King carried on war as no European power has ever carried on war, except the Committee of Public Safety during the great agony of the French Revolution. He governed his kingdom as he would have

governed a besieged town, not caring to what extent property was destroyed, or the pursuits of civil life suspended, so that he did but make head against the enemy. As long as there was a man left in Prussia, that man might carry a musket—as long as there was a horse left, that horse might draw artillery. The coin was debased, the civil functionaries were left unpaid; in some provinces civil government altogether ceased to exist. But there were still rye-bread and potatoes; there were still lead and gunpowder; and, while the means of sustaining and destroying life remained, Frederic was determined to fight it out to the very last.

The earlier part of the campaign of 1760 was unfavourable to him. Berlin was again occupied by the enemy. Great contributions were levied on the inhabitants, and the royal palace was plundered. But at length, after two years of calamity, victory came back to his arms. At Lignitz he gained a great battle over Laudohn; at Torgau, after a day of horrible carnage, he triumphed over Daun. The fifth year closed, and still the event was in suspense. In the countries where the war had raged, the misery and exhaustion were more appalling than ever; but still there were left men and beasts, arms and food, and still Frederic fought on. In truth be had now been baited into savageness. His heart was ulcerated with hatred. The implacable resentment with which his enemies persecuted him, though originally provoked by his own unprincipled ambition, excited in him a thirst for vengeance which he did not even attempt to conceal. "It is hard," he says in one of his letters, "for man to bear what I bear. I begin to feel that, as the Italians say, revenge is a pleasure for the gods. My philosophy is worn out by suffering. I am no saint, like those of whom we read in the legends; and I will own that I should die content if only I could first inflict a portion of the misery which I endure."

Borne up by such feelings, he struggled with various

success, but constant glory, through the campaign of 1761. On the whole, the result of this campaign was disastrous to Prussia. No great battle was gained by the enemy; but, in spite of the desperate bounds of the hunted tiger, the circle of pursuers was fast closing round him. Laudohn had surprised the important fortress of Schweidnitz. With that fortress, half of Silesia, and the command of the most important defiles through the mountains, had been transferred to the Austrians. The Russians had overpowered the King's generals in Pomerania. The country was so completely desolated that he began, by his own confession, to look round him with blank despair, unable to imagine where recruits, horses, or provisions were to be found.

Just at this time two great events brought on a complete change in the relations of almost all the powers of Europe. One of those events was the retirement of Mr. Pitt from office; the other was the death of the Empress Elizabeth of Russia.

The retirement of Pitt seemed to be an omen of utter ruin to the House of Brandenburg. His proud and vehement nature was incapable of anything that looked like either fear or treachery. He had often declared that, while he was in power, England should never make a peace of Utrecht;—should never, for any selfish object, abandon an ally even in the last extremity of distress. The Continental war was his own war. He had been bold enough —he who in former times had attacked, with irresistible powers of oratory, the Hanoverian policy of Carteret, and the German subsidies of Newcastle—to declare that Hanover ought to be as dear to us as Hampshire, and that he would conquer America in Germany. He had fallen; and the power which he had exercised, not always with discretion, but always with vigour and genius, had devolved on a favourite who was the representative of the Tory party—of the party which had thwarted William, which

had persecuted Marlborough, and which had given up the Catalans to the vengeance of Philip of Anjou. To make peace with France—to shake off with all, or more than all, the speed compatible with decency, every Continental connection, these were among the chief objects of the new Minister. The policy then followed inspired Frederic with an unjust, but deep and bitter aversion to the English name; and produced effects which are still felt throughout the civilised world. To that policy it was owing that, some years later, England could not find on the whole Continent a single ally to stand by her, in her extreme need, against the House of Bourbon. To that policy it was owing that Frederic, alienated from England, was compelled to connect himself closely, during his later years, with Russia; and was induced reluctantly to assist in that great crime, the fruitful parent of other great crimes—the first partition of Poland.

Scarcely had the retreat of Mr. Pitt deprived Prussia of her only friend, when the death of Elizabeth produced an entire revolution in the politics of the North. The Grand Duke Peter, her nephew, who now ascended the Russian throne, was not merely free from the prejudices which his aunt had entertained against Frederic, but was a worshipper, a servile imitator, a Boswell, of the great king. The days of the new Czar's government were few and evil, but sufficient to produce a change in the whole state of Christendom. He set the Prussian prisoners at liberty, fitted them out decently, and sent them back to their master; he withdrew his troops from the provinces which Elizabeth had decided on incorporating with her dominions, and absolved all those Prussian subjects, who had been compelled to swear fealty to Russia, from their engagements.

Not content with concluding peace on terms favourable to Prussia, he solicited rank in the Prussian service, dressed himself in a Prussian uniform, wore the Black Eagle

of Prussia on his breast, made preparations for visiting Prussia, in order to have an interview with the object of his idolatry, and actually sent fifteen thousand excellent troops to reinforce the shattered army of Frederic. Thus strengthened, the King speedily repaired the losses of the preceding year, reconquered Silesia, defeated Daun at Buckersdorf, invested and retook Schweidnitz, and, at the close of the year, presented to the forces of Maria Theresa a front as formidable as before the great reverses of 1759. Before the end of the campaign, his friend the Emperor Peter having, by a series of absurd insults to the institutions, manners, and feelings of his people, united them in hostility to his person and government, was deposed and murdered. The Empress, who, under the title of Catherine the Second, now assumed the supreme power, was, at the commencement of her administration, by no means partial to Frederic, and refused to permit her troops to remain under his command. But she observed the peace made by her husband; and Prussia was no longer threatened by danger from the East.

England and France at the same time paired off together. They concluded a treaty, by which they bound themselves to observe neutrality with respect to the German war. Thus the coalitions on both sides were dissolved; and the original enemies, Austria and Prussia, remained alone confronting each other.

Austria had undoubtedly by far greater means than Prussia, and was less exhausted by hostilities; yet it seemed hardly possible that Austria could effect alone what she had in vain attempted to effect when supported by France on the one side, and by Russia on the other. Danger also began to menace the Imperial house from another quarter. The Ottoman Porte held threatening language, and a hundred thousand Turks were mustered on the frontiers of Hungary. The proud and revengeful spirit of the Empress-

Queen at length gave way; and, in February, 1763, the peace of Hubertsburg put an end to the conflict which had, during seven years, devasted Germany. The King ceded nothing. The whole Continent in arms had proved unable to tear Silesia from that iron grasp.

The war was over. Frederic was safe. His glory was beyond the reach of envy. If he had not made conquests as vast as those of Alexander, of Cæsar, and of Napoleon —if he had not, on field of battle, enjoyed the constant success of Marlborough and Wellington—he had yet given an example unrivalled in history of what capacity and resolution can effect against the greatest superiority of power and the utmost spite of fortune. He entered Berlin in triumph, after an absence of more than six years. The streets were brilliantly lighted up; and, as he passed along in an open carriage, with Ferdinand of Brunswick at his side, the multitude saluted him with loud praises and blessings. He was moved by those marks of attachment, and repeatedly exclaimed—"Long live my dear people!—Long live my children!" Yet, even in the midst of that gay spectacle, he could not but perceive everywhere the traces of destruction and decay. The city had been more than once plundered. The population had considerably diminished. Berlin, however, had suffered little when compared with most parts of the kingdom. The ruin of private fortunes, the distress of all ranks, was such as might appal the firmest mind. Almost every province had been the seat of war, and of war conducted with merciless ferocity. Clouds of Croatians had descended on Silesia. Tens of thousands of Cossacks had been let loose on Pomerania and Brandenburg. The mere contributions levied by the invaders amounted, it was said, to more than a hundred millions of dollars; and the value of what they extorted was probably much less than the value of what they destroyed. The fields lay uncultivated. The very seed-corn had been devoured in the

madness of hunger. Famine, and contagious maladies the effect of famine, had swept away the herds and flocks; and there was reason to fear that a great pestilence among the human race was likely to follow in the train of that tremendous war. Near fifteen thousand houses had been burned to the ground.

The population of the kingdom had in seven years decreased to the frightful extent of ten per cent. A sixth of the males capable of bearing arms had actually perished on the field of battle. In some districts, no labourers, except women, were seen in the fields at harvest-time. In others, the traveller passed shuddering through a succession of silent villages, in which not a single inhabitant remained. The currency had been debased; the authority of laws and magistrates had been suspended; the whole social system was deranged. For, during that convulsive struggle, everything that was not military violence was anarchy. Even the army was disorganised. Some great generals, and a crowd of excellent officers, had fallen, and it had been impossible to supply their places. The difficulty of finding recruits had, towards the close of the war, been so great, that selection and rejection were impossible. Whole battalions were composed of deserters or of prisoners. It was hardly to be hoped that thirty years of repose and industry would repair the ruin produced by seven years of havoc. One consolatory circumstance, indeed, there was. No debt had been incurred. The burdens of the war had been terrible, almost insupportable; but no arrear was left to embarrass the finances in the time of peace.

Here, for the present, we must pause. We have accompanied Frederic to the close of his career as a warrior. Possibly, when these Memoirs are completed, we may resume the consideration of his character, and give some account of his domestic and foreign policy, and of his private habits, during the many years of tranquillity which followed the Seven Years' War.

LAYS

OF

ANCIENT ROME.

BY

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

PREFACE.

THAT what is called the history of the Kings and early Consuls of Rome is to a great extent fabulous, few scholars have, since the time of Beaufort, ventured to deny. It is certain that, more than three hundred and sixty years after the date ordinarily assigned for the foundation of the city, the public records were, with scarcely an exception, destroyed by the Gauls. It is certain that the oldest annals of the commonwealth were compiled more than a century and a half after the destruction of the records. It is certain, therefore, that the great Latin writers of a later period did not possess those materials, without which a trustworthy account of the infancy of the republic could not possibly be framed. They own, indeed, that the chronicles to which they had access were filled with battles that were never fought, and Consuls that were never inaugurated; and we have abundant proof that, in those chronicles, events of the greatest importance, such as the issue of the war with Porsena, and the issue of the war with Brennus, were grossly misrepresented. Under these circumstances a wise man will look with great suspicion on the legend which has come down to us. He will, perhaps, be inclined to regard the princes who are said to have founded the civil and religious institutions of Rome, the

son of Mars, and the husband of Egeria, as mere mythological personages, of the same class with Perseus and Ixion. As he draws nearer and nearer to the confines of authentic history, he will become less and less hard of belief. He will admit that the most important parts of the narrative have some foundation in truth. But he will distrust almost all the details, not only because they seldom rest on any solid evidence, but also because he will constantly detect in them, even when they are within the limits of physical possibility, that peculiar character, more easily understood than defined, which distinguishes the creations of the imagination from the realities of the world in which we live.

The early history of Rome is indeed far more poetical than anything else in Latin literature. The loves of the Vestal and the God of War, the cradle laid among the reeds of Tiber, the fig tree, the she-wolf, the shepherd's cabin, the recognition, the fratricide, the rape of the Sabines, the death of Tarpeia, the fall of Hostus Hostilius, the struggle of Mettus Curtius through the marsh, the women rushing with torn raiment and dishevelled hair between their fathers and their husbands, the nightly meetings of Numa and the Nymph by the well in the sacred grove, the fight of the three Romans and the three Albans, the purchase of the Sibylline books, the crime of Tullia, the simulated madness of Brutus, the ambiguous reply of the Delphian oracle to the Tarquins, the wrongs of Lucretia, the heroic actions of Horatius Cocles, of Scævola, and of Clœlia, the battle of Regillus won by the aid of Castor and Pollux, the fall of Cremera, the touching story of Coriolanus, the still more touching story of Virginia, the wild legend about the draining of the Alban lake, the combat between Valerius Corvus and the gigantic Gaul, are among the many instances which will at once suggest themselves to every reader.

In the narrative of Livy, who was a man of fine imagination, these stories retain much of their genuine character.

Nor could even the tasteless Dionysius distort and mutilate them into mere prose. The poetry shines, in spite of him, through the dreary pedantry of his eleven books. It is discernible in the most tedious and in the most superficial modern works on the early times of Rome. It enlivens the dulness of the Universal History, and gives a charm to the most meagre abridgments of Goldsmith.

Even in the age of Plutarch there were discerning men who rejected the popular account of the foundation of Rome, because that account appeared to them to have the air, not of a history, but of a romance or a drama. Plutarch, who was displeased at their incredulity, had nothing better to say in reply to their arguments than that chance sometimes turns poet, and produces trains of events not to be distinguished from the most elaborate plots which are constructed by art.* But though the existence of a poetical element in the early history of the Great City was detected so many ages ago, the first critic who distinctly saw from what source that poetical element had been derived was James Perizonius, one of the most acute and learned critics of the seventeenth century. His theory, which, in his own age, attracted little or no notice, was revived in the present generation by Niebuhr, a man who would have been the first writer of his time, if his talent for communicating truths had borne any proportion to his talent for investigating them. It has been adopted by several eminent

* Ὕποπτον μὲν ἐνίοις ἐστὶ τὸ δραματικὸν καὶ πλασματῶδες· οὐ δεῖ δὲ ἀπιστεῖν, τὴν τύχην ὁρῶντας, οἷων ποιημάτων δημιουργός ἐστι.—Plut. Rom. viii. This remarkable passage has been more grossly misinterpreted than any other in the Greek language, where the sense was so obvious. The Latin version of Cruserius, the French version of Amyot, the old English version by several hands, and the later English version by Langhorne, are all equally destitute of every trace of the meaning of the original. None of the translators saw even that ποίημα is a poem. They all render it an event.

scholars of our own country, particularly by the Bishop of St. David's, by Professor Malden, and by the lamented Arnold. It appears to be now generally received by men conversant with classical antiquity; and indeed it rests on such strong proofs, both internal and external, that it will not be easily subverted. A popular exposition of this theory and of the evidence by which it is supported may not be without interest even for readers who are unacquainted with the ancient languages.

The Latin literature which has come down to us is of later date than the commencement of the second Punic war, and consists almost exclusively of words fashioned on Greek models. The Latin metres, heroic, elegiac, lyric, and dramatic, are of Greek origin. The best Latin epic poetry is the feeble echo of the Iliad and Odyssey. The best Latin eclogues are imitations of Theocritus. The plan of the most finished didactic poem in the Latin tongue was taken from Hesiod. The Latin tragedies are bad copies of the master-pieces of Sophocles and Euripides. The Latin comedies are free translations from Demophilus, Menander, and Apollodorus. The Latin philosophy was borrowed, without alteration, from the Portico and the Academy; and the great Latin orators constantly proposed to themselves as patterns the speeches of Demosthenes and Lysias.

But there was an earlier Latin literature, a literature truly Latin, which has wholly perished—which had, indeed, almost wholly perished long before those whom we are in the habit of regarding as the greatest Latin writers were born. That literature abounded with metrical romances, such as are found in every country where there is much curiosity and intelligence, but little reading and writing. All human beings, not utterly savage, long for some information about past times, and are delighted by narratives which present pictures to the eye of the mind. But it is only in very enlightened communities that books are

readily accessible. Metrical composition, therefore, which, in a highly civilised nation, is a mere luxury, is, in nations imperfectly civilised, almost a necessary of life, and is valued less on account of the pleasure which it gives to the ear, than on account of the help which it gives to the memory. A man who can invent or embellish an interesting story, and put it into a form which others may easily retain in their recollection, will always be highly esteemed by a people eager for amusement and information, but destitute of libraries. Such is the origin of ballad-poetry, a species of composition which scarcely ever fails to spring up and flourish in every society, at a certain point in the progress towards refinement. Tacitus informs us that songs were the only memorials of the past which the ancient Germans possessed. We learn from Lucan and from Ammianus Marcellinus, that the brave actions of the ancient Gauls were commemorated in the verses of Bards. During many ages, and through many revolutions, minstrelsy retained its influence over both the Teutonic and the Celtic race. The vengeance exacted by the spouse of Attila for the murder of Siegfried was celebrated in rhymes, of which Germany is still justly proud. The exploits of Athelstane were commemorated by the Anglo-Saxons, and those of Canute by the Danes, in rude poems, of which a few fragments have come down to us. The chaunts of the Welsh harpers preserved, through ages of darkness, a faint and doubtful memory of Arthur. In the highlands of Scotland may still be gleaned some reliques of the old songs about Cuthullin and Fingal. The long struggle of the Servians against the Ottoman power was recorded in lays full of martial spirit. We learn from Herrera that, when a Peruvian Inca died, men of skill were appointed to celebrate him in verses, which all the people learned by heart, and sang in public on days of festival. The feats of Kurroglou, the great freebooter of Turkistan, recounted in ballads com-

posed by himself, are known in every village of Northern Persia. Captain Beechey heard the bards of the Sandwich Islands recite the heroic achievements of Tamehameha, the most illustrious of their kings. Mungo Park found in the heart of Africa a class of singing men, the only annalists of their rude tribes, and heard them tell the story of the great victory which Damel, the negro prince of the Jaloffs, won over Abdulkader, the Mussulman tyrant of Foota Torra. This species of poetry attained a high degree of excellence among the Castilians, before they began to copy Tuscan patterns. It attained a still higher degree of excellence among the English and the Lowland Scotch, during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. But it reached its full perfection in ancient Greece; for there can be no doubt that the great Homeric poems are generically ballads, though widely indeed distinguished from all other ballads, and, indeed, from almost all other human compositions, by transcendant merit.

As it is agreeable to general experience that, at a certain stage in the progress of society, ballad-poetry should flourish, so is it also agreeable to general experience that, at a subsequent stage in the progress of society, ballad-poetry should be undervalued and neglected. Knowledge advances: manners change: great foreign models of composition are studied and imitated. The phraseology of the old minstrels becomes obsolete. Their versification, which, having received its laws only from the ear, abounds in irregularities, seems licentious and uncouth. Their simplicity appears beggarly when compared with the quaint forms and gaudy colouring of such artists as Cowley and Gongora. The ancient lays, unjustly despised by the learned and polite, linger for a time in the memory of the vulgar, and are at length too often irretrievably lost. We cannot wonder that the ballads of Rome should have altogether disappeared, when we remember how very nar-

rowly, in spite of the invention of printing, those of our own country and those of Spain escaped the same fate. There is, indeed, little doubt that oblivion covers many English songs equal to any that were published by Bishop Percy, and many Spanish songs as good as the best of those which have been so happily translated by Mr. Lockhart. Eighty years ago England possessed only one tattered copy of Childe Waters and Sir Cauline, and Spain only one tattered copy of the noble poem of the Cid. The snuff of a candle, or a mischievous dog, might in a moment have deprived the world for ever of any of those fine compositions. Sir Walter Scott, who united to the fire of a great poet the minute curiosity and patient diligence of a great antiquary, was but just in time to save the precious reliques of the Minstrelsy of the Border. In Germany, the lay of the Nibelungs had been long utterly forgotten, when, in the eighteenth century, it was, for the first time, printed from a manuscript in the old library of a noble family. In truth, the only people who, through their whole passage from simplicity to the highest civilisation, never for a moment ceased to love and admire their old ballads, were the Greeks.

That the early Romans should have had ballad-poetry, and that this poetry should have perished, is, therefore, not strange. It would, on the contrary, have been strange if had not come to pass; and we should be justified in pronouncing them highly probable, even if we had no direct evidence on the subject. But we have direct evidence of unquestionable authority.

Ennius, who flourished in the time of the Second Punic War, was regarded in the Augustan age as the father of Latin poetry. He was, in truth, the father of the second school of Latin poetry,—of the only school of which the works have descended to us. But from Ennius himself we learn that there were poets who stood to him in the

same relation in which the author of the romance of Count Alarcos stood to Garcilaso, or the author of the "Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode" to Lord Surrey. Ennius speaks of verses which the Fauns and the Bards were wont to chaunt in the old time, when none had yet studied the graces of speech, when none had yet climbed the peaks sacred to the Goddesses of Grecian song. "Where," Cicero mournfully asks, "are those old verses now?"*

Contemporary with Ennius was Quintus Fabius Pictor, the earliest of the Roman annalists. His account of the infancy and youth of Romulus and Remus has been preserved by Dionysius, and contains a very remarkable reference to the old Latin poetry. Fabius says that, in his time, his countrymen were still in the habit of singing ballads about the Twins. "Even in the hut of Faustulus,"—so these old lays appear to have run,—"the children of Rhea and Mars were, in port and in spirit, not like unto swineherds or cow-

* "Quid? Nostri veteres versus ubi sunt?
. . . . . 'Quos olim Fauni vatesque canebant,
Cum neque Musarum scopulos quisquam superárat,
Nec dicti studiosus erat.'"

Cic. in *Bruto*, cap. xviii.

The Muses, it should be observed, are Greek divinities. The Italian Goddesses of verse were the Camœnæ. At a later period, the appellations were used indiscriminately; but in the age of Ennius there was probably a distinction. In the epitaph of Nævius who was the representative of the old Italian school of poetry, the Camœnæ, not the Muses, are represented as grieving for the loss of their votary. The "Musarum scopuli" are evidently the peaks of Parnassus.

Scaliger, in a note on Varro (*De Lingua Latina*, lib. vi.) suggests, with great ingenuity, that the Fauns, who were represented by the superstition of later ages as a race of monsters, half gods and half brutes, may really have been a class of men who exercised in Latium, at a very remote period, the same functions which belonged to the Magians in Persia and to the Bards in Gaul.

herds, but such that men might well guess them to be of the blood of Kings and Gods."*

* Οἱ δὲ ἀνδρωθέντες γίνονται, κατά τε ἀξίωσιν μορφῆς καὶ φρονήματος ὄγκον, οὐ συνοφρόσιν καὶ βουκόλοις ἐοικότες, ἀλλ' οἵους ἄν τις ἀξιώσειε τοὺς ἐκ βασιλείου τε Φύντας γένους, καὶ ἀπὸ δαιμόνων σπορᾶς γενέσθαι νομιζομένους, ὡς ἐν τοῖς πατρίοις ὕμνοις ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων ἔτι καὶ νῦν ᾄδεται.—*Dion. Hal.* i. 79. This passage has sometimes been cited as if Dionysius had been speaking in his own person, and had, Greek as he was, been so industrious or so fortunate as to discover some valuable remains of that early Latin poetry which the greatest Latin writers of his age regretted as hopelessly lost. Such a supposition is highly improbable; and indeed it seems clear from the context that Dionysius, as Reiske and other editors evidently thought, was merely quoting from Fabius Pictor. The whole passage has the air of an extract from an ancient chronicle, and is introduced by the words, Κόϊντος μὲν Φάβιος ὁ Πίκτωρ λεγόμενος, τῇδε γράφει.

Another argument may be urged which seems to deserve consideration. The author of the passage in question mentions a thatched hut which, in his time, stood between Mount Palatine and the Circus. This hut, he says, was built by Romulus, and was constantly kept in repair at the public charge, but never in any respect embellished. Now, in the age of Dionysius there certainly was at Rome a thatched hut, said to have been that of Romulus. But this hut, as we learn from Vitruvius, stood, not near the Circus, but in the Capitol. (*Vit.* ii. 1.) If, therefore, we understand Dionysius to speak in his own person, we can reconcile his statement with that of Vitruvius only by supposing that there were at Rome, in the Augustan age, two thatched huts, both believed to have been built by Romulus, and both carefully repaired, and held in high honour. The objections to such a supposition seem to be strong. Neither Dionysius nor Vitruvius speaks of more than one such hut. Dio Cassius informs us that twice, during the long administration of Augustus, the hut of Romulus caught fire. (xlviii. 43. liv. 29.) Had there been two such huts, would he not have told us of which he spoke? An English historian would hardly give an account of a fire at Queen's College without saying whether it was at Queen's College, Oxford, or at Queen's College, Cambridge. Marcus Seneca, Macrobius, and Conon, a Greek writer from whom Photius has made large extracts, mention only one hut of Romulus, that in the Capitol.

Cato the Censor, who also lived in the days of the Second Punic War, mentioned this lost literature in his lost work on the antiquities of his country.—Many ages, he said, before his time, there were ballads in praise of illustrious men; and these ballads it was the fashion for the guests at banquets to sing in turn while the piper played. "Would," exclaims Cicero, "that we still had the old ballads of which Cato speaks!"*

(*M. Seneca, Contr.* i. 6; *Macrobius, Sat.* i. 15; *Photius, Bibl.* 186.) Ovid, Petronius, Valerius Maximus, Lucius Seneca, and St. Jerome mention only one hut of Romulus, without specifying the site. (*Ovid, Fasti,* iii. 183; *Petronius, Fragm.; Val. Max.* iv. 4; *L. Seneca, Consolatio ad Helviam; D. Hieron. ad Paulinianum de Didymo.*

The whole difficulty is removed, if we suppose that Dionysius was merely quoting Fabius Pictor. Nothing is more probable than that the cabin, which in the time of Fabius stood near the Circus, might, long before the age of Augustus, have been transported to the Capitol, as the place fittest, by reason both of its safety and of its sanctity, to contain so precious a relique.

The language of Plutarch confirms this hypothesis. He describes, with great precision, the spot where Romulus dwelt, between the Palatine Mount and the Circus; but he says not a word implying that the dwelling was still to be seen there. Indeed, his expressions imply that it was no longer there. The evidence of Solinus is still more to the point. He, like Plutarch, describes the spot where Romulus had resided, and says expressly that the hut had been there, but that, in his time, it was there no longer. The site, it is certain, was well remembered; and probably retained its old name, as Charing Cross and the Haymarket have done. This is probably the explanation of the words, "casa Romuli" in Victor's description of the Tenth Region of Rome, under Valentinian.

* Cicero refers twice to this important passage in Cato's Antiquities:—"Gravissimus auctor in 'Originibus' dixit Cato, morem apud majores hunc epularum fuisse, ut deinceps, qui accubarent, canerent ad tibiam clarorum virorum laudes atque virtutes. Ex quo perspicuum est, et cantus tum fuisse rescriptos vocum sonis, et carmina."—*Tusc. Quæst.* iv. 2. Again: "Utinam exstarent

Valerius Maximus gives us exactly similar information, without mentioning his authority, and observes that the ancient Roman ballads were probably of more benefit to the young than all the lectures of the Athenian schools, and that to the influence of the national poetry were to be ascribed the virtues of such men as Camillus and Fabricius.*

Varro, whose authority on all questions connected with the antiquities of his country is entitled to the greatest respect, tells us that at banquets it was once the fashion for boys to sing, sometimes with and sometimes without instrumental music, ancient ballads in praise of men of former times. These young performers, he observes, were of unblemished character, a circumstance which he probably mentioned because, among the Greeks, and indeed in his time among the Romans also, the morals of singing boys were in no high repute.†

The testimony of Horace, though given incidentally, confirms the statements of Cato, Valerius Maximus, and Varro. The poet predicts that, under the peaceful administration of Augustus, the Romans will, over their full goblets, sing to the pipe, after the fashion of their fathers, the deeds of brave captains, and the ancient legends touching the origin of the city.‡

illa carmina quæ multis sæculis ante suam ætatem in epulis esse cantitata a singulis convivis de clarorum virorum laudibus in 'Originibus' scriptum reliquit Cato."—*Brutus*, cap. xix.

* "Majores natu in conviviis ad tibias egregia superiorum opera carmine comprehensa pangebant, quo ad ea imitanda juventutem alacriorum redderent. . . . Quas Athenas, quam scholam, quæ alienigena studia huic domesticæ disciplinæ prætulerim? Inde oriebantur Camilli, Scipiones, Fabricii, Marcelli, Fabii."—*Val. Max.* ii. 1.

† "In conviviis pueri modesti ut cantarent carmina antiqua, in quibus laudes erant majorum, et assa voce, et cum tibicine." Nonius, *Assa voce pro sola.*

‡ "Nosque et profestis lucibus et sacris,
Inter jocosi munera Liberi,

The proposition, then, that Rome had ballad-poetry is not merely in itself highly probable, but is fully proved by direct evidence of the greatest weight.

This proposition being established, it becomes easy to understand why the early history of the city is unlike almost everything else in Latin literature—native where almost everything else is borrowed, imaginative where almost everything else is prosaic. We can scarcely hesitate to pronounce that the magnificent, pathetic, and truly national legends, which present so striking a contrast to all that surrounds them, are broken and defaced fragments of that early poetry which, even in the age of Cato the Censor, had become antiquated, and of which Tully had never heard a line.

That this poetry should have been suffered to perish will not appear strange when we consider how complete was the triumph of the Greek genius over the public mind of Italy. It is probable that, at an early period, Homer, Archilochus, and Herodotus, furnished some hints to the Latin minstrels:* but it was not till after the war with Pyrrhus that the poetry of Rome began to put off its old Ausonian character. The transformation was soon consummated. The conquered, says Horace, led captive the conquerors. It was precisely at the time at which the Roman people rose to unrivalled political ascendency, that they stooped to pass under the intellectual yoke. It was precisely at the time at which the sceptre departed from Greece that the

> Cum prole matronisque nostris,
> Rite Deos prius apprecati,
> Virtute functos, MORE PATRUM, duces,
> Lydis remixto carmine tibiis,
> Trojamque, et Anchisen, et almæ
> Progeniem Veneris canemus."
>
> *Carm.* iv. 51.

* See the Preface to the Lay of the Battle of Regillus.

empire of her language and of her arts become universal and despotic. The revolution indeed was not effected without a struggle. Nævius seems to have been the last of the ancient line of poets. Ennius was the founder of a new dynasty. Nævius celebrated the First Punic War in Saturnian verse, the old national verse of Italy.* Ennius sang

* Cicero speaks highly in more than one place of this poem of Nævius; Ennius sneered at it, and stole from it.

As to the Saturnian measure, see Herman's Elementa Doctrinæ Metricæ, iii. 9.

The Saturnian line consisted of two parts. The first was a catalectic dimeter iambic; the second was composed of three trochees. But the license taken by the early Latin poets seems to have been almost boundless. The most perfect Saturnian line which has been preserved by the grammarians was the work, not of a professional artist, but of an amateur:

"Dabunt malum Metelli Nævio poetæ."

There has been much difference of opinion among learned men respecting the history of this measure. That it is the same with a Greek measure used by Archilochus is indisputable. (Bentley, Phalaris, xi.) But in spite of the authority of Terentianus Maurus, and of the still higher authority of Bentley, we may venture to doubt whether the coincidence was not fortuitous. We constantly find the same rude and simple numbers in different countries, under circumstances which make it impossible to suspect that there has been imitation on either side. Bishop Heber heard the children of a village in Bengal singing "Radha, Radha," to the tune of "My boy Billy." Neither the Castilian nor the German minstrels of the middle ages owed anything to Paros or to ancient Rome. Yet both the poem of the Cid and the poem of the Nibelungs contain many Saturnian verses; as,—

"Estas nuevas a mio Cid eran venidas."
"A mi lo dicen; a ti dan las orejadas."

"Man möhte michel wunder von Sifride sagen."
"Wa ich den Künic vinde daz sol man mir sagen."

Indeed, there cannot be a more perfect Saturnian line than one which is sung in every English nursery—

the Second Punic War in numbers borrowed from the Iliad. The elder poet, in the epitaph which he wrote for

"The queen was in her parlour eating bread and honey;"

yet the author of this line, we may be assured, borrowed nothing from either Nævius or Archilochus.

On the other hand, it is by no means improbable that, two or three hundred years before the time of Ennius, some Latin minstrel may have visited Sybaris or Crotona, may have heard some verses of Archilochus sung, may have been pleased with the metre, and may have introduced it at Rome. Thus much is certain, that the Saturnian measure, if not a native of Italy, was at least so early and so completely naturalised there that its foreign origin was forgotten.

Bentley says, indeed, that the Saturnian measure was first brought from Greece into Italy by Nævius. But this is merely *obiter dictum*, to use a phrase common in our courts of law, and would not have been deliberately maintained by that incomparable critic, whose memory is held in reverence by all lovers of learning. The arguments which might be brought against Bentley's assertion—for it is mere assertion, supported by no evidence—are innumerable. A few will suffice.

1. Bentley's assertion is opposed to the testimony of Ennius. Ennius sneered at Nævius for writing on the First Punic War in verses such as the old Italian bards used before Greek literature had been studied. Now the poem of Nævius was in Saturnian verse. Is it possible that Ennius could have used such expressions, if the Saturnian verse had been just imported from Greece for the first time?

2. Bentley's assertion is opposed to the testimony of Horace. "When Greece," says Horace, "introduced her arts into our uncivilised country, those rugged Saturnian numbers passed away." Would Horace have said this, if the Saturnian numbers had been imported from Greece just before the hexameter?

3. Bentley's assertion is opposed to the testimony of Festus and of Aurelius Victor, both of whom positively say that the most ancient prophecies attributed to the Fauns were in Saturnian verse.

4. Bentley's assertion is opposed to the testimony of Terentianus Maurus, to whom he has himself appealed. Terentianus Maurus does indeed say that the Saturnian measure, though

himself, and which is a fine specimen of the early Roman diction and versification, plaintively boasted that the Latin language had died with him.* Thus, what to Horace appeared to be the first faint dawn of Roman literature, appeared to Nævius to be its hopeless setting. In truth, one literature was setting, and another dawning.

The victory of the foreign taste was decisive: and indeed we can hardly blame the Romans for turning away with contempt from the rude lays which had delighted their fathers, and giving their whole admiration to the great productions of Greece. The national romances, neglected by the great and the refined whose education had been finished at Rhodes or Athens, continued, it may be supposed, during some generations, to delight the vulgar. While Virgil, in hexameters of exquisite modulation, described the sports of rustics, those rustics were still singing their wild Saturnian ballads.† It is not improbable that, at the time when Cicero lamented the irreparable loss of the poems mentioned by Cato, a search among the nooks of the Apennines, as active as the search which Sir Walter Scott made among the descendants of the mosstroopers of Liddesdale, might have

believed by the Romans from a very early period ("credidit vetustas") to be of Italian invention, was really borrowed from the Greeks. But Terentianus Maurus does not say that it was first borrowed by Nævius. Nay, the expressions used by Terentianus Maurus clearly imply the contrary: for how could the Romans have believed, from a very early period, that this measure was the indigenous production of Latium, if it was really brought over from Greece in an age of intelligence and liberal curiosity,—in the age which gave birth to Ennius, Plautus, Cato the Censor, and other distinguished writers? If Bentley's assertion were correct, there could have been no more doubt at Rome about the Greek origin of the Saturnian measure than about the Greek origin of hexameters or Sapphics.

* Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticæ*, i. 24.

† See Servius, in Georg. ii. 385.

brought to light many fine remains of ancient minstrelsy. No such search was made. The Latin ballads perished for ever. Yet discerning critics have thought that they could still perceive in the early history of Rome numerous fragments of this lost poetry, as the traveller on classic ground sometimes finds, built into the heavy wall of a fort or convent, a pillar rich with acanthus leaves, or a frieze where the Amazons and Bacchanals seem to live. The theatres and temples of the Greek and the Roman were degraded into the quarries of the Turk and the Goth. Even so did the old Saturnian poetry become the quarry in which a crowd of orators and annalists found the materials for their prose.

It is not difficult to trace the process by which the old songs were transmuted into the form which they now wear. Funeral panegyric and chronicle appear to have been the intermediate links which connected the lost ballads with the histories now extant. From a very early period it was the usage that an oration should be pronounced over the remains of a noble Roman. The orator, as we learn from Polybius, was expected, on such an occasion, to recapitulate all the services which the ancestors of the deceased had, from the earliest time, rendered to the commonwealth. There can be little doubt that the speaker on whom this duty was imposed would make use of all the stories suited to his purpose which were to be found in the popular lays. There can be as little doubt that the family of an eminent man would preserve a copy of the speech which had been pronounced over his corpse. The compilers of the early chronicles would have recourse to these speeches; and the great historians of a later period would have recourse to the chronicles.

It may be worth while to select a particular story, and to trace its probable progress through these stages. The description of the migration of the Fabian house to Cre-

mera is one of the finest of the many fine passages which lie thick in the earlier books of Livy. The Consul, clad in his military garb, stands in the vestibule of his house, marshalling his clan, three hundred and six fighting men, all of the same proud patrician blood, all worthy to be attended by the fasces, and to command the legions. A sad and anxious retinue of friends accompanies the adventurers through the streets; but the voice of lamentation is drowned by the shouts of admiring thousands. As the procession passes the Capitol, prayers and vows are poured forth, but in vain. The devoted band, leaving Janus on the right, marches to its doom through the Gate of Evil Luck. After achieving great deeds of valour against overwhelming numbers, all perish save one child, the stock from which the great Fabian race was destined again to spring, for the safety and glory of the commonwealth. That this fine romance, the details of which are so full of poetical truth, and so utterly destitute of all show of historical truth, came originally from some lay which had often been sung with great applause at banquets, is in the highest degree probable. Nor is it difficult to imagine a mode in which the transmission might have taken place. The celebrated Quintus Fabius Maximus, who died about twenty years before the First Punic War, and more than forty years before Ennius was born, is said to have been interred with extraordinary pomp. In the eulogy pronounced over his body all the great exploits of his ancestors were doubtless recounted and exaggerated. If there were then extant songs which gave a vivid and touching description of an event, the saddest and the most glorious in the long history of the Fabian house, nothing could be more natural than that the panegyrist should borrow from such songs their finest touches, in order to adorn his speech. A few generations later the songs would perhaps be forgotten, or remembered only by shepherds and vine-

dressers. But the speech would certainly be preserved in the archives of the Fabian nobles. Fabius Pictor would be well acquainted with a document so interesting to his personal feelings, and would insert large extracts from it in his rude chronicle. That chronicle, as we know, was the oldest to which Livy had access. Livy would at a glance distinguish the bold strokes of the forgotten poet from the dull and feeble narrative by which they were surrounded, would retouch them with a delicate and powerful pencil, and would make them immortal.

That this might happen at Rome can scarcely be doubted; for something very like this has happened in several countries, and, among others, in our own. Perhaps the theory of Perizonius cannot be better illustrated than by showing that what he supposes to have taken place in ancient times has, beyond all doubt, taken place in modern times.

"History," says Hume, with the utmost gravity, "has preserved some instances of Edgar's amours, from which, as from a specimen, we may form a conjecture of the rest." He then tells very agreeably the stories of Elfleda and Elfrida; two stories which have a most suspicious air of romance, and, which, indeed, greatly resemble, in their general character, some of the legends of early Rome. He cites, as his authority for these two tales, the chronicle of William of Malmesbury, who lived in the time of King Stephen. The great majority of readers suppose that the device by which Elfleda was substituted for her young mistress, the artifice by which Athelwold obtained the hand of Elfrida, the detection of that artifice, the hunting party, and the vengeance of the amorous king, are things about which there is no more doubt than about the execution of Anne Boleyn, or the slitting of Sir John Coventry's nose. But, when we turn to William of Malmesbury, we find that Hume, in his eagerness to relate these pleasant

fables, has overlooked one very important circumstance. William does indeed tell both the stories; but he gives us distinct notice that he does not warrant their truth, and that they rest on no better authority than that of ballads.*

Such is the way in which these two well-known tales have been handed down. They originally appeared in a poetical form. They found their way from ballads into an old chronicle. The ballads perished; the chronicle remained. A great historian, some centuries after the ballads had been altogether forgotten, consulted the chronicle. He was struck by the lively colouring of these ancient fictions; he transferred them to his pages; and thus we find inserted, as unquestionable facts, in a narrative which is likely to last as long as the English tongue, the inventions of some minstrel whose works were probably never committed to writing, whose name is buried in oblivion, and whose dialect has become obsolete. It must, then, be admitted to be possible, or rather highly probable, that the stories of Romulus and Remus, and of the Horatii and Curiatii, may have had a similar origin.

Castilian literature will furnish us with another parallel case. Mariana, the classical historian of Spain, tells the story of the ill-starred marriage which the King Don Alonso brought about between the heirs of Carrion and the two daughters of the Cid. The Cid bestowed a princely dower on his sons-in-law. But the young men were base and proud, cowardly and cruel. They were tried in danger, and found wanting. They fled before the Moors, and once, when a lion broke out of his den, they ran and couched in an unseemly hiding place. They knew that they were despised, and took counsel how they might be avenged.

* "Infamias quas post dicam magis resperserunt cantilenæ." Edgar appears to have been most mercilessly treated in the Anglo-Saxon ballads. He was the favourite of the monks; and the monks and minstrels were at deadly feud.

They parted from their father-in-law with many signs of love, and set forth on a journey with Doña Elvira and Doña Sol. In a solitary place the bridegrooms seized their brides, stripped them, scourged them, and departed, leaving them for dead. But one of the house of Bivar, suspecting foul play, had followed them in disguise. The ladies were brought back safe to the house of their father. Complaint was made to the king. It was adjudged by the Cortes that the dower given by the Cid should be returned, and that the heirs of Carrion together with one of their kindred should do battle against three knights of the party of the Cid. The guilty youths would have declined the combat; but all their shifts were vain. They were vanquished in the lists, and for ever disgraced, while their injured wives were sought in marriage by great princes.*

Some Spanish writers have laboured to show, by an examination of dates and circumstances, that this story is untrue. Such confutation was surely not needed; for the narrative is on the face of it a romance. How it found its way into Mariana's history is quite clear. He acknowledges his obligations to the old chronicles, and had doubtless before him the "Cronica del famoso Cavallero Cid Ruy Diez Campeador," which had been printed as early as the year 1552. He little suspected that all the most striking passages in this chronicle were copied from a poem of the twelfth century, a poem of which the language and versification had long been obsolete, but which glowed with no common portion of the fire of the Iliad. Yet such was the fact. More than a century and a half after the death of Mariana, this grand old ballad, of which one imperfect copy on parchment, four hundred years old, had been preserved at Bivar, was for the first time printed. Then it was found that every interesting circumstance of the story of the heirs

* Mariana, lib. x. cap. 4.

of Carrion was derived by the eloquent Jesuit from a song of which he had never heard, and which was composed by a minstrel whose very name had long been forgotten.*

Such, or nearly such, appears to have been the process by which the lost ballad-poetry of Rome was tranformed into history. To reverse that process, to transform some portions of early Roman history back into the poetry out of which they were made, is the object of this work.

In the following poems the author speaks, not in his own person, but in the persons of ancient minstrels who know only what a Roman citizen, born three or four hundred years before the Christian æra, may be supposed to have known, and who are in nowise above the passions and prejudices of their age and country. To these imaginary poets must be ascribed some blunders which are so obvious that it is unnecessary to point them out. The real blunder would have been to represent these old poets as deeply versed in general history, and studious of chronological accuracy. To them must also be attributed the illiberal sneers at the Greeks, the furious party spirit, the contempt for the arts of peace, the love of war for its own sake, the ungenerous exultation over the vanquished, which the reader will sometimes observe. To portray a Roman of the age of Camillus or Curius as superior to national antipathies, as mourning over the devastation and slaughter by which empire and triumphs were to be won, as looking on human suffering with the sympathy of Howard, or as treating conquered enemies with the delicacy of the Black Prince, would be to violate all dramatic propriety. The old Romans had some great virtues,—fortitude, temper-

* See the account which Sanchez gives of the Bivar manuscript in the first volume of the *Coleccion de Poesias Castellanas anteriores al Siglo XV.* Part of the story of the lords of Carrion, in the poem of the Cid, has been translated by Mr Frere in a manner above all praise.

ance, veracity, spirit to resist oppression, respect for legitimate authority, fidelity in the observing of contracts, disinterestedness, ardent public-spirit; but Christian charity and chivalrous generosity were alike unknown to them.

It would have been obviously improper to mimic the manner of any particular age or country. Something has been borrowed, however, from our own old ballads, and more from Sir Walter Scott, the great restorer of our ballad-poetry. To the Iliad still greater obligations are due; and those obligations have been contracted with the less hesitation because there is reason to believe that some of the old Latin minstrels really had recourse to that inexhaustible store of poetical images.

It would have been easy to swell this little volume to a very considerable bulk, by appending notes filled with quotations; but to a learned reader such notes are not necessary; for an unlearned reader they would have little interest; and the judgment passed both by the learned and by the unlearned on a work of the imagination will always depend much more on the general character and spirit of such a work than on minute details.

HORATIUS.

THERE can be little doubt that among those parts of early Roman history which had a poetical origin was the legend of Horatius Cocles. We have several versions of the story, and these versions differ from each other in points of no small importance. Polybius, there is reason to believe, heard the tale recited over the remains of some Consul or Prætor descended from the old Horatian patricians; for he evidently introduces it as a specimen of the narratives with which the Romans were in the habit of embellishing their funeral oratory. It is remarkable that, according to his description, Horatius defended the bridge alone, and perished in the waters. According to the chronicles which Livy and Dionysius followed, Horatius had two companions, swam safe to shore, and was loaded with honours and rewards.

These discrepancies are easily explained. Our own literature, indeed, will furnish an exact parallel to what may have taken place at Rome. It is highly probable that the memory of the war of Porsena was preserved by compositions much resembling the two ballads which stand first in the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. In both those ballads the English, commanded by the Percy, fight with the Scots, commanded by the Douglas. In one of the ballads, the Douglas is killed by a nameless English archer, and the Percy by a Scottish spearman: in the other, the

Percy slays the Douglas in single combat, and is himself made prisoner. In the former, Sir Hugh Montgomery is shot through the heart by a Northumbrian bowman: in the latter, he is taken, and exchanged for the Percy. Yet both the ballads relate to the same event, and that an event which probably took place within the memory of persons who were alive when both the ballads were made. One of the minstrels says:

"Old men that knowen the grownde well yenoughe
Call it the battell of Otterburn:
At Otterburn began this spurne
Upon a monnyn day.
Ther was the dougghte Doglas slean:
The Perse never went away."

The other poet sums up the event in the following lines:

"Thys fraye bygan at Otterborne
Bytwene the nyghte and the day:
Ther the Dowglas lost hys lyfe,
And the Percy was lede away."

It is by no means unlikely that there were two old Roman lays about the defence of the bridge; and that, while the story which Livy has transmitted to us was preferred by the multitude, the other, which ascribed the whole glory to Horatius alone, may have been the favourite with the Horatian house.

The following ballad is supposed to have been made about a hundred and twenty years after the war which it celebrates, and just before the taking of Rome by the Gauls. The author seems to have been an honest citizen, proud of the military glory of his country, sick of the disputes of factions, and much given to pining after good old times which had never really existed. The allusion how-

ever, to the partial manner in which the public lands were allotted could proceed only from a plebeian; and the allusion to the fraudulent sale of spoils marks the date of the poem, and shows that the poet shared in the general discontent with which the proceedings of Camillus, after the taking of Veii, were regarded.

The penultimate syllable of the name Porsena has been shortened in spite of the authority of Niebuhr, who pronounces, without assigning any ground for his opinion, that Martial was guilty of a decided blunder in the line,

"Hanc spectare manum Porsena non potuit."

It is not easy to understand how any modern scholar, whatever his attainments may be,—and those of Niebuhr were undoubtedly immense,—can venture to pronounce that Martial did not know the quantity of a word which he must have uttered and heard uttered a hundred times before he left school. Niebuhr seems also to have forgotten that Martial has fellow culprits to keep him in countenance. Horace has committed the same decided blunder; for he gives us, as a pure iambic line,

"Minacis aut Etrusca Porsenæ manus."

Silius Italicus has repeatedly offended in the same way, as when he says,

"Cernitur effugiens ardentem Porsena dextram:"

and again,

"Clusinum vulgus, cum, Porsena magne, jubebas."

A modern writer may be content to err in such company.

Niebuhr's supposition that each of the three defenders of the bridge was the representative of one of the three patrician tribes is both ingenious and probable, and has been adopted in the following poem.

HORATIUS.

A LAY MADE ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCLX.

1.

Lars Porsena of Clusium
By the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin
Should suffer wrong no more.
By the Nine Gods he swore it,
And named a trysting day,
And bade his messengers ride forth,
East and west and south and north,
To summon his array.

2.

East and west and south and north
The messengers ride fast,
And tower and town and cottage
Have heard the trumpet's blast.
Shame on the false Etruscan
Who lingers in his home,
When Porsena of Clusium
Is on the march for Rome.

3.

The horsemen and the footmen
Are pouring in amain
From many a stately market-place;
From many a fruitful plain;
From many a lonely hamlet,
Which, hid by beech and pine,
Like an eagle's nest, hangs on the crest
Of purple Apennine;

4.

From lordly Volaterræ,
Where scowls the far-famed hold
Piled by the hands of giants
For godlike kings of old;
From seagirt Populonia,
Whose sentinels descry
Sardinia's snowy mountain-tops
Fringing the southern sky;

5.

From the proud mart of Pisæ,
Queen of the western waves,
Where ride Massilia's triremes
Heavy with fair-haired slaves;
From where sweet Clanis wanders
Through corn and vines and flowers;
From where Cortona lifts to heaven
Her diadem of towers.

6.

Tall are the oaks whose acorns
Drop in dark Auser's rill;

Fat are the stags that champ the boughs
Of the Ciminian hill;
Beyond all streams Clitumnus
Is to the herdsman dear;
Best of all pools the fowler loves
The great Volsinian mere.

7.

But now no stroke of woodman
Is heard by Auser's rill;
No hunter tracks the stag's green path
Up the Ciminian hill;
Unwatched along Clitumnus
Grazes the milk-white steer;
Unharmed the water fowl may dip
In the Volsinian mere.

8.

The harvests of Arretium,
This year, old men shall reap;
This year, young boys in Umbro
Shall plunge the struggling sheep;
And in the vats of Luna,
This year, the must shall foam
Round the white feet of laughing girls,
Whose sires have marched to Rome.

9.

There be thirty chosen prophets,
The wisest of the land,
Who alway by Lars Porsena
Both morn and evening stand:
Evening and morn the Thirty
Have turned the verses o'er,

Traced from the right on linen white
By mighty seers of yore.

10.

And with one voice the Thirty
Have their glad answer given:
"Go forth, go forth, Lars Porsena;
Go forth, beloved of Heaven;
Go, and return in glory
To Clusium's royal dome;
And hang round Nurscia's altars
The golden shields of Rome."

11.

And now hath every city
Sent up her tale of men;
The foot are fourscore thousand,
The horse are thousands ten.
Before the gates of Sutrium
Is met the great array,
A proud man was Lars Porsena
Upon the trysting day.

12.

For all the Etruscan armies
Were ranged beneath his eye,
And many a banished Roman,
And many a stout ally;
And with a mighty following
To join the muster came
The Tusculan Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name.

13.

But by the yellow Tiber
Was tumult and affright:
From all the spacious champaign
To Rome men took their flight.
A mile around the city,
The throng stopped up the ways;
A fearful sight it was to see
Through two long nights and days.

14.

For aged folk on crutches,
And women great with child,
And mothers sobbing over babes
That clung to them and smiled,
And sick men borne in litters
High on the necks of slaves,
And troops of sun-burned husbandmen
With reaping-hooks and staves,

15.

And droves of mules and asses
Laden with skins of wine,
And endless flocks of goats and sheep,
And endless herds of kine,
And endless trains of waggons
That creaked beneath their weight
Of corn-sacks and of household goods,
Choked every roaring gate.

16.

Now, from the rock Tarpeian,
Could the wan burghers spy

The line of blazing villages
Red in the midnight sky.
The Fathers of the City,
They sat all night and day,
For every hour some horseman came
With tidings of dismay.

17.

To eastward and to westward
Have spread the Tuscan bands;
Nor house, nor fence, nor dovecote,
In Crustumerium stands.
Verbenna down to Ostia
Hath wasted all the plain;
Astur hath stormed Janiculum,
And the stout guards are slain.

18.

I wis, in all the Senate,
There was no heart so bold,
But sore it ached, and fast it beat,
When that ill news was told.
Forthwith up rose the Consul,
Up rose the Fathers all;
In haste they girded up their gowns,
And hied them to the wall.

19.

They held a council standing
Before the River-gate;
Short time was there, ye well may guess,
For musing or debate.
Out spoke the Consul roundly:
"The bridge must straight go down;

For, since Janiculum is lost,
Nought else can save the town."

20.

Just then a scout came flying,
All wild with haste and fear:
"To arms! to arms! Sir Consul;
Lars Porsena is here."
On the low hills to westward
The Consul fixed his eye,
And saw the swarthy storm of dust
Rise fast along the sky.

21.

And nearer fast and nearer
Doth the red whirlwind come;
And louder still and still more loud,
From underneath that rolling cloud,
Is heard the trumpet's war-note proud,
The trampling, and the hum.
And plainly and more plainly
Now through the gloom appears,
Far to left and far to right,
In broken gleams of dark-blue light,
The long array of helmets bright,
The long array of spears.

22.

And plainly and more plainly,
Above that glimmering line,
Now might ye see the banners
Of twelve fair cities shine;

But the banner of proud Clusium
Was highest of them all,
The terror of the Umbrian,
The terror of the Gaul.

23.

And plainly and more plainly
Now might the burghers know,
By port and vest, by horse and crest,
Each warlike Lucumo.
There Cilnius of Arretium
On his fleet roan was seen;
And Astur of the four-fold shield,
Girt with the brand none else may wield,
Tolumnius with the belt of gold,
And dark Verbenna from the hold
By reedy Thrasymene.

24.

Fast by the royal standard,
O'erlooking all the war,
Lars Porsena of Clusium
Sate in his ivory car.
By the right wheel rode Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name;
And by the left false Sextus,
That wrought the deed of shame.

25.

But when the face of Sextus
Was seen among the foes,
A yell that rent the firmament
From all the town arose.

On the house-tops was no woman
But spate towards him and hissed;
No child but screamed out curses,
And shook its little fist.

26.

But the Consul's brow was sad,
And the Consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he at the wall,
And darkly at the foe.
"Their van will be upon us
Before the bridge goes down;
And if they once may win the bridge,
What hope to save the town?"

27.

Then out spake brave Horatius,
The Captain of the gate:
"To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers
And the temples of his Gods,

28.

"And for the tender mother
Who dandled him to rest,
And for the wife who nurses
His baby at her breast,
And for the holy maidens
Who feed the eternal flame,

To save them from false Sextus
That wrought the deed of shame?

29.

"Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
With all the speed ye may;
I, with two more to help me,
Will hold the foe in play.
In yon strait path a thousand
May well be stopped by three.
Now who will stand on either hand,
And keep the bridge with me?"

30.

Then out spake Spurius Lartius;
A Ramnian proud was he:
"Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
And keep the bridge with thee."
And out spake strong Herminius;
Of Titian blood was he:
"I will abide on thy left side,
And keep the bridge with thee."

31.

"Horatius," quoth the Consul,
"As thou sayest, so let it be."
And straight against that great array
Forth went the dauntless Three.
For Romans in Rome's quarrel
Spared neither land nor gold,
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
In the brave days of old.

32.

Then none was for a party;
Then all were for the state;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great:
Then lands were fairly portioned;
Then spoils were fairly sold:
The Romans were like brothers
In the brave days of old.

33.

Now Roman is to Roman
More hateful than a foe,
And the Tribunes beard the high,
And the Fathers grind the low.
As we wax hot in faction,
In battle we wax cold;
Wherefore men fight not as they fought
In the brave days of old.

34.

Now while the Three were tightening
Their harness on their backs,
The Consul was the foremost man
To take in hand an axe:
And Fathers mixed with Commons
Seized hatchet, bar, and crow,
And smote upon the planks above,
And loosed the props below.

35.

Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
Right glorious to behold,

Came flashing back the noonday light,
Rank behind rank, like surges bright
Of a broad sea of gold.
Four hundred trumpets sounded
A peal of warlike glee,
As that great host, with measured tread,
And spears advanced, and ensigns spread,
Rolled slowly towards the bridge's head,
Where stood the dauntless Three.

36.

The Three stood calm and silent
And looked upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter
From all the vanguard rose:
And forth three chiefs came spurring
Before that mighty mass;
To earth they sprang, their swords they drew,
And lifted high their shields, and flew
To win the narrow pass;

37.

Aunus from green Tifernum,
Lord of the Hill of Vines;
And Seius, whose eight hundred slaves
Sicken in Ilva's mines;
And Picus, long to Clusium
Vassal in peace and war,
Who led to fight his Umbrian powers
From that grey crag where, girt with towers,
The fortress of Nequinum lowers
O'er the pale waves of Nar.

38.

Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus
Into the stream beneath:
Herminius struck at Seius,
And clove him to the teeth:
At Picus brave Horatius
Darted one fiery thrust;
And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms
Clashed in the bloody dust.

39.

Then Ocnus of Falerii
Rushed on the Roman Three;
And Lausulus of Urgo,
The rover of the sea;
And Aruns of Volsinium,
Who slew the great wild boar,
The great wild boar that had his den
Amidst the reeds of Cosa's fen,
And wasted fields, and slaughtered men,
Along Albinia's shore.

40.

Herminius smote down Aruns:
Lartius laid Ocnus low:
Right to the heart of Lausulus
Horatius sent a blow.
"Lie there," he cried, "fell pirate!
No more, aghast and pale,
From Ostia's walls the crowd shall mark
The track of thy destroying bark.

No more Campania's hinds shall fly
To woods and caverns when they spy
Thy thrice accursed sail."

41.

But now no sound of laughter
Was heard amongst the foes.
A wild and wrathful clamour
From all the vanguard rose.
Six spears' lengths from the entrance
Halted that mighty mass,
And for a space no man came forth
To win the narrow pass.

42.

But hark! the cry is Astur:
And lo! the ranks divide;
And the great Lord of Luna
Comes with his stately stride.
Upon his ample shoulders
Clangs loud the four-fold shield,
And in his hand he shakes the brand
Which none but he can wield.

43.

He smiled on those bold Romans
A smile serene and high;
He eyed the flinching Tuscans,
And scorn was in his eye.
Quoth he, "The she-wolf's litter
Stand savagely at bay:
But will ye dare to follow,
If Astur clears the way?"

44.

Then, whirling up his broadsword
With both hands to the height,
He rushed against Horatius,
And smote with all his might.
With shield and blade Horatius
Right deftly turned the blow.
The blow, though turned, came yet too nigh;
It missed his helm, but gashed his thigh:
The Tuscans raised a joyful cry
To see the red blood flow.

45.

He reeled, and on Herminius
He leaned one breathing-space;
Then, like a wild cat mad with wounds,
Sprang right at Astur's face.
Through teeth, and skull, and helmet,
So fierce a thrust he sped,
The good sword stood a hand-breadth out
Behind the Tuscan's head.

46.

And the great Lord of Luna
Fell at that deadly stroke,
As falls on Mount Alvernus
A thunder-smitten oak.
Far o'er the crashing forest
The giant arms lie spread;
And the pale augurs, muttering low,
Gaze on the blasted head.

47.

On Astur's throat Horatius
Right firmly pressed his heel,
And thrice and four times tugged amain,
Ere he wrenched out the steel.
"And see," he cried, "the welcome,
Fair guests, that waits you here!
What noble Lucumo comes next
To taste our Roman cheer?"

48.

But at his haughty challenge
A sullen murmur ran,
Mingled of wrath, and shame, and dread,
Along that glittering van.
There lacked not men of prowess,
Nor men of lordly race;
For all Etruria's noblest
Were round the fatal place.

49.

But all Etruria's noblest
Felt their hearts sink to see
On the earth the bloody corpses,
In the path the dauntless Three:
And, from the ghastly entrance
Where those bold Romans stood,
All shrank, like boys who unaware,
Ranging the woods to start a hare,
Come to the mouth of the dark lair
Where, growling low, a fierce old bear
Lies amidst bones and blood.

50.

Was none who would be foremost
To lead such dire attack;
But those behind cried "Forward!"
And those before cried "Back!"
And backward now and forward
Wavers the deep array;
And on the tossing sea of steel,
To and fro the standards reel;
And the victorious trumpet-peal
Dies fitfully away.

51.

Yet one man for one moment
Strode out before the crowd;
Well known was he to all the Three,
And they gave him greeting loud.
"Now welcome, welcome, Sextus!
Now welcome to thy home!
Why dost thou stay, and turn away?
Here lies the road to Rome."

52.

Thrice looked he on the city;
Thrice looked he at the dead;
And thrice came on in fury,
And thrice turned back in dread:
And, white with fear and hatred,
Scowled at the narrow way
Where, wallowing in a pool of blood,
The bravest Tuscans lay.

53.

But meanwhile axe and lever
Have manfully been plied,
And now the bridge hangs tottering
Above the boiling tide.
"Come back, come back, Horatius!"
Loud cried the Fathers all.
"Back, Lartius! back, Herminius!
Back, ere the ruin fall!"

54.

Back darted Spurius Lartius;
Herminius darted back:
And, as they passed, beneath their feet
They felt the timbers crack.
But when they turned their faces,
And on the farther shore
Saw brave Horatius stand alone,
They would have crossed once more.

55.

But with a crash like thunder
Fell every loosened beam,
And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
Lay right athwart the stream:
And a long shout of triumph
Rose from the walls of Rome,
As to the highest turret-tops
Was splashed the yellow foam.

56.

And, like a horse unbroken
When first he feels the rein,

The furious river struggled hard,
And tossed his tawny mane;
And burst the curb, and bounded,
Rejoicing to be free;
And whirling down, in fierce career,
Battlement, and plank, and pier,
Rushed headlong to the sea.

57.

Alone stood brave Horatius,
But constant still in mind;
Thrice thirty thousand foes before,
And the broad flood behind.
"Down with him!" cried false Sextus,
With a smile on his pale face.
"Now yield thee," cried Lars Porsena,
"Now yield thee to our grace."

58.

Round turned he, as not deigning
Those craven ranks to see;
Nought spake he to Lars Porsena,
To Sextus nought spake he;
But he saw on Palatinus
The white porch of his home;
And he spake to the noble river
That rolls by the towers of Rome.

59.

"Oh, Tiber! father Tiber!
To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms,
Take thou in charge this day!"

So he spake, and speaking sheathed
The good sword by his side,
And, with his harness on his back,
Plunged headlong in the tide.

60.

No sound of joy or sorrow
Was heard from either bank;
But friends and foes in dumb surprise,
With parted lips and straining eyes,
Stood gazing where he sank;
And when above the surges
They saw his crest appear,
All Rome sent forth a rapturous cry,
And even the ranks of Tuscany
Could scarce forbear to cheer.

61.

But fiercely ran the current,
Swollen high by months of rain:
And fast his blood was flowing;
And he was sore in pain,
And heavy with his armour,
And spent with changing blows:
And oft they thought him sinking,
But still again he rose.

62.

Never, I ween, did swimmer,
In such an evil case,
Struggle through such a raging flood
Safe to the landing place:

But his limbs were borne up bravely
By the brave heart within,
And our good father Tiber
Bare bravely up his chin. (1)

63.

"Curse on him!" quoth false Sextus;
"Will not the villain drown?
But for this stay, ere close of day
We should have sacked the town!"
"Heaven help him!" quoth Lars Porsena,
"And bring him safe to shore;
For such a gallant feat of arms
Was never seen before."

64.

And now he feels the bottom;
Now on dry earth he stands;
Now round him throng the Fathers
To press his gory hands;
And now with shouts and clapping,
And noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the River-gate,
Borne by the joyous crowd.

65.

They gave him of the corn-land,
That was of public right,
As much as two strong oxen
Could plough from morn till night;
And they made a molten image,
And set it up on high,
And there it stands unto this day
To witness if I lie.

66.

It stands in the Comitium,
Plain for all folk to see;
Horatius in his harness,
Halting upon one knee:
And underneath is written,
In letters all of gold,
How valiantly he kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

67.

And still his name sounds stirring
Unto the men of Rome,
As the trumpet blast that cries to them
To charge the Volscian home;
And wives still pray to Juno
For boys with hearts as bold
As his who kept the bridge so well
In the brave days of old.

68.

And in the nights of winter,
When the cold north winds blow,
And the long howling of the wolves
Is heard amidst the snow;
When round the lonely cottage
Roars loud the tempest's din,
And the good logs of Algidus
Roar louder yet within;

69.

When the oldest cask is opened,
And the largest lamp is lit,

When the chesnuts glow in the embers,
And the kid turns on the spit;
When young and old in circle
Around the firebrands close;
When the girls are weaving baskets,
And the lads are shaping bows;

70.

When the goodman mends his armour,
And trims his helmet's plume;
When the goodwife's shuttle merrily
Goes flashing through the loom;
With weeping and with laughter
Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

---

(1) "Our ladye bare upp her chinne."

Ballad of Childe Waters.

"Never heavier man and horse
Stemmed a midnight torrent's force;
* * * * * *
Yet, through good heart and our Lady's grace,
At length he gained the landing place."

Lay of the Last Minstrel, I.

THE

BATTLE OF THE LAKE REGILLUS.

The following poem is supposed to have been produced ninety years after the lay of Horatius. Some persons mentioned in the lay of Horatius make their appearance again, and some appellations and epithets used in the lay of Horatius have been purposely repeated: for, in an age of ballad-poetry, it scarcely ever fails to happen, that certain phrases come to be appropriated to certain men and things, and are regularly applied to those men and things by every minstrel. Thus we find, both in the Homeric poems and in Hesiod, βίη Ἡρακληείη, περικλύτος Ἀμφιγυήεις, διάκτορος Ἀργειφόντης, ἑπτάπυλος Θήβη, Ἑλένης ἕνεκ' ἠϋκόμοιο. Thus, too, in our own national songs, Douglas is almost always the doughty Douglas: England is merry England: all the gold is red; and all the ladies are gay.

The principal distinction between the lay of Horatius and the lay of the Lake Regillus is, that the former is meant to be purely Roman, while the latter, though national in its general spirit, has a slight tincture of Greek learning and of Greek superstition. The story of the Tarquins, as it has come down to us, appears to have been compiled from the works of several popular poets; and one, at least, of those poets appears to have visited the Greek colonies in Italy, if not Greece itself, and to have had some acquaintance with the works of Homer and Herodotus.

Many of the most striking adventures of the house of Tarquin, till Lucretia makes her appearance, have a Greek character. The Tarquins themselves are represented as Corinthian nobles of the great house of the Bacchiadæ, driven from their country by the tyranny of that Cypselus, the tale of whose strange escape Herodotus has related with incomparable simplicity and liveliness.* Livy and Dionysius tell us that, when Tarquin the Proud was asked what was the best mode of governing a conquered city, he replied only by beating down with his staff all the tallest poppies in his garden.† This is exactly what Herodotus, in the passage to which reference has already been made, relates of the counsel given to Periander, the son of Cypselus. The stratagem by which the town of Gabii is brought under the power of the Tarquins is, again, obviously copied from Herodotus.‡ The embassy of the young Tarquins to the oracle at Delphi is just such a story as would be told by a poet whose head was full of the Greek mythology; and the ambiguous answer returned by Apollo is in the exact style of the prophecies which, according to Herodotus, lured Crœsus to destruction. Then the character of the narrative changes. From the first mention of Lucretia to the retreat of Porsena nothing seems to be borrowed from foreign sources. The villany of Sextus, the suicide of his victim, the revolution, the death of the sons of Brutus, the defence of the bridge, Mucius burning his hand,§ Clœlia swimming through Tiber, seem to be all strictly Roman. But when we have done with the Tuscan war,

* Herodotus, v. 92. Livy, i. 34. Dionysius, iii. 46.

† Livy, i. 54. Dionysius, iv. 56.

‡ Herodotus, iii. 154. Livy, i. 53.

§ M. de Pouilly attempted, a hundred and twenty years ago, to prove that the story of Mucius was of Greek origin; but he was signally confuted by the Abbé Sallier. See the *Mémoires de l' Académie des Inscriptions*, vi. 27. 66.

and enter upon the war with the Latines, we are again struck by the Greek air of the story. The Battle of the Lake Regillus is in all respects a Homeric battle, except that the combatants ride astride on their horses, instead of driving chariots. The mass of fighting men is hardly mentioned. The leaders single each other out, and engage hand to hand. The great object of the warriors on both sides is, as in the Iliad, to obtain possession of the spoils and bodies of the slain; and several circumstances are related which forcibly remind us of the great slaughter round the corpses of Sarpedon and Patroclus.

But there is one circumstance which deserves especial notice. Both the war of Troy and the war of Regillus were caused by the licentious passions of young princes, who were therefore peculiarly bound not to be sparing of their own persons in the day of battle. Now the conduct of Sextus at Regillus, as described by Livy, so exactly resembles that of Paris, as described at the beginning of the third book of the Iliad, that it is difficult to believe the resemblance accidental. Paris appears before the Trojan ranks, defying the bravest Greek to encounter him:

> Τρωσὶν μὲν προμάχιζεν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδὴς,
> . . . . . Ἀργείων προκαλίζετο πάντας ἀρίστους,
> ἀντίβιον μαχέσασθαι ἐν αἰνῇ δηϊοτῆτι.

Livy introduces Sextus in a similar manner: "Ferocem juvenem Tarquinium, ostentantem se in primâ exsulum acie." Menelaus rushes to meet Paris. A Roman noble, eager for vengeance, spurs his horse towards Sextus. Both the guilty princes are instantly terror-stricken:

> Τὸν δ' ὡς οὖν ἐνόησεν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδὴς,
> ἐν προμάχοισι φανέντα, κατεπλήγη φίλον ἦτορ,
> ἂψ δ' ἐτάρων εἰς ἔθνος ἐχάζετο κῆρ ἀλεείνων.

"Tarquinius," says Livy, "retro in agmen suorum infenso

cessit hosti." If this be a fortuitous coincidence, it is one of the most extraordinary in literature.

In the following poem, therefore, images and incidents have been borrowed, not merely without scruple, but on principle, from the incomparable battle-pieces of Homer.

The popular belief at Rome, from an early period, seems to have been that the event of the great day of Regillus was decided by supernatural agency. Castor and Pollux, it was said, had fought, armed and mounted, at the head of the legions of the commonwealth, and had afterwards carried the news of the victory with incredible speed to the city. The well in the Forum at which they had alighted was pointed out. Near the well rose their ancient temple. A great festival was kept to their honour on the Ides of Quintilis, supposed to be the anniversary of the battle; and on that day sumptuous sacrifices were offered to them at the public charge. One spot on the margin of Lake Regillus was regarded during many ages with superstitious awe. A mark, resembling in shape a horse's hoof, was discernible in the volcanic rock; and this mark was believed to have been made by one of the celestial chargers.

How the legend originated, cannot now be ascertained: but we may easily imagine several ways in which it might have originated: nor is it at all necessary to suppose, with Julius Frontinus, that two young men were dressed up by the Dictator to personate the sons of Leda. It is probable that Livy is correct when he says that the Roman general, in the hour of peril, vowed a temple to Castor. If so, nothing could be more natural than that the multitude should ascribe the victory to the favour of the Twin Gods. When such was the prevailing sentiment, any man who chose to declare that, in the midst of the confusion and slaughter, he had seen two godlike forms on white horses scattering the Latines, would find ready credence. We know, indeed, that, in modern times, a very similar story

actually found credence among a people much more civilised than the Romans of the fifth century before Christ. A chaplain of Cortes, writing about thirty years after the conquest of Mexico, in an age of printing-presses, libraries, universities, scholars, logicians, jurists, and statesmen, had the face to assert that, in one engagement against the Indians, St. James had appeared on a grey horse at the head of the Castilian adventurers. Many of these adventurers were living when this lie was printed. One of them, honest Bernal Diaz, wrote an account of the expedition. He had the evidence of his own senses against the chaplain's legend; but he seems to have distrusted even the evidence of his own senses. He says that he was in the battle, and that he saw a grey horse with a man on his back, but that the man was, to his thinking, Francesco de Morla, and not the ever-blessed apostle St. James. "Nevertheless," he adds, "it may be that the person on the grey horse was the glorious apostle St. James, and that I, sinner that I am, was unworthy to see him." The Romans of the age of Cincinnatus were probably quite as credulous as the Spanish subjects of Charles the Fifth. It is therefore conceivable that the appearance of Castor and Pollux may have become an article of faith before the generation which had fought at Regillus had passed away. Nor could anything be more natural than that the poets of the next age should embellish this story, and make the celestial horsemen bear the tidings of victory to Rome.

Many years after the temple of the Twin Gods had been built in the Forum, an important addition was made to the ceremonial by which the state annually testified its gratitude for their protection. Quintus Fabius and Publius Decius were elected Censors at a momentous crisis. It had become absolutely necessary that the classification of the citizens should be revised. On that classification depended the distribution of political power. Party spirit

ran high; and the republic seemed to be in danger of falling under the dominion either of a narrow oligarchy or of an ignorant and headstrong rabble. Under such circumstances, the most illustrious patrician and the most illustrous plebeian of the age were intrusted with the office of arbitrating between the angry factions; and they performed their arduous task to the satisfaction of all honest and reasonable men.

One of their reforms was a remodelling of the equestrian order; and, having effected this reform, they determined to give to their work a sanction derived from religion. In the chivalrous societies of modern times, societies which have much more than may at first sight appear in common with the equestrian order of Rome, it has been usual to invoke the special protection of some Saint, and to observe his day with peculiar solemnity. Thus the Companions of the Garter wear the image of St. George depending from their collars, and meet, on great occasions, in St. George's Chapel. Thus, when Louis the Fourteenth instituted a new order of chivalry for the rewarding of military merit, he commended it to the favour of his own glorified ancestor and patron, and decreed that all the members of the fraternity should meet at the royal palace on the Feast of St. Louis, should attend the king to chapel, should hear mass, and should subsequently hold their great annual assembly. There is a considerable resemblance between this rule of the Order of St. Louis and the rule which Fabius and Decius made respecting the Roman knights. It was ordained that a grand muster and inspection of the equestrian body should be part of the ceremonial performed, on the anniversary of the battle of Regillus, in honour of Castor and Pollux, the two equestrian Gods. All the knights, clad in purple and crowned with olive, were to meet at a temple of Mars in the suburbs. Thence they were to ride in state to the Forum, where the temple

of the Twins stood. This pageant was, during several centuries, considered as one of the most splendid sights of Rome. In the time of Dionysius the cavalcade sometimes consisted of five thousand horsemen, all persons of fair repute and easy fortune.*

There can be no doubt that the Censors who instituted this magnificent ceremony acted in concert with the Pontiffs to whom, by the constitution of Rome, the superintendence of the public worship belonged; and it is probable that those high religious functionaries were, as usual, fortunate enough to find in their books or traditions some warrant for the innovation.

The following poem is supposed to have been made for this great occasion. Songs, we know, were chaunted at the religious festivals of Rome from an early period, indeed from so early a period that some of the sacred verses were popularly ascribed to Numa, and were utterly unintelligible in the age of Augustus. In the Second Punic War a great feast was held in honour of Juno, and a song was sung in her praise. This song was extant when Livy wrote; and, though exceedingly rugged and uncouth, seemed to him not wholly destitute of merit.† A song, as we learn from Horace, was part of the established ritual at the great Secular Jubilee.‡ It is therefore likely that the Censors and Pontiffs, when they had resolved to add a grand procession of knights to the other solemnities annually performed on the Ides of Quintilis, would call in the aid of a poet. Such a poet would naturally take for his subject the battle of Regillus, the appearance of the Twin Gods, and the institution of their festival. He would find abundant materials in

* See Livy, ix. 46. Val. Max., ii. 2. Aurel. Vict. De Viris Illustribus, 32. Dionysius, vi. 13. Plin. Hist. Nat., xv. 5. See also the singularly ingenious chapter in Niebuhr's posthumous volume, *Die Censur des Q. Fabius und P. Decius.*

† Livy, xxvii. 37. ‡ Hor. Carmen Seculare.

the ballads of his predecessors; and he would make free use of the scanty stock of Greek learning which he had himself acquired. He would probably introduce some wise and holy Pontiff enjoining the magnificent ceremonial which, after a long interval, had at length been adopted. If the poem succeeded, many persons would commit it to memory. Parts of it would be sung to the pipe at banquets. It would be peculiarly interesting to the great Posthumian House, which numbered among its many images that of the Dictator Aulus, the hero of Regillus. The orator who, in the following generation, pronounced the funeral panegyric over the remains of Lucius Posthumius Megellus, thrice Consul, would borrow largely from the lay; and thus some passages, much disfigured, would probably find their way into the chronicles which were afterwards in the hands of Dionysius and Livy.

Antiquarians differ widely as to the situation of the field of battle. The opinion of those who suppose that the armies met near Cornufelle, between Frascati and the Monte Porzio, is, at least, plausible, and has been followed in the poem.

As to the details of the battle, it has not been thought desirable to adhere minutely to the accounts which have come down to us. Those accounts, indeed, differ widely from each other, and, in all probability, differ as widely from the ancient poem from which they were originally derived.

It is unnecessary to point out the obvious imitations of the Iliad, which have been purposely introduced.

THE

BATTLE OF THE LAKE REGILLUS.

A LAY SUNG AT THE FEAST OF CASTOR AND POLLUX ON THE IDES OF QUINTILIS, IN THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCCLI.

1.

Ho, trumpets, sound a war-note!
Ho, lictors, clear the way!
The Knights will ride, in all their pride,
Along the streets to-day.
To-day the doors and windows
Are hung with garlands all,
From Castor in the Forum,
To Mars without the wall.
Each Knight is robed in purple,
With olive each is crown'd;
A gallant war-horse under each
Paws haughtily the ground.
While flows the Yellow River,
While stands the Sacred Hill,
The proud Ides of Quintilis
Shall have such honour still.
Gay are the Martian Kalends:
December's Nones are gay:
But the proud Ides, when the squadron rides,
Shall be Rome's whitest day.

2.

Unto the Great Twin Brethren
We keep this solemn feast.
Swift, swift, the Great Twin Brethren
Came spurring from the east.
They came o'er wild Parthenius
Tossing in waves of pine,
O'er Cirrha's dome, o'er Adria's foam,
O'er purple Apennine,
From where with flutes and dances
Their ancient mansion rings,
In lordly Lacedæmon,
The City of two kings,
To where, by Lake Regillus,
Under the Porcian height,
All in the lands of Tusculum,
Was fought the glorious fight.

3.

Now on the place of slaughter
Are cots and sheepfolds seen,
And rows of vines, and fields of wheat,
And apple-orchards green.
The swine crush the big acorns
That fall from Corne's oaks:
Upon the turf by the Fair Fount
The reapers pottage smokes.
The fisher baits his angle;
The hunter twangs his bow;
Little they think on those strong limbs
That moulder deep below.

Little they think how sternly
That day the trumpets pealed;
How in the slippery swamp of blood
Warrior and war-horse reeled;
How wolves came with fierce gallop,
And crows on eager wings,
To tear the flesh of captains,
And peck the eyes of kings;
How thick the dead lay scattered
Under the Porcian height;
How through the gates of Tusculum
Raved the wild stream of flight;
And how the Lake Regillus
Bubbled with crimson foam,
What time the Thirty Cities
Came forth to war with Rome.

4.

But, Roman, when thou standest
Upon that holy ground,
Look thou with heed on the dark rock
That girds the dark lake round.
So shalt thou see a hoof-mark
Stamped deep into the flint:
It was no hoof of mortal steed
That made so strange a dint:
There to the Great Twin Brethren
Vow thou thy vows, and pray
That they, in tempest and in fight,
Will keep thy head alway.

5.

Since last the Great Twin Brethren
Of mortal eyes were seen,

Have years gone by an hundred
And fourscore and thirteen.
That summer a Virginius
Was Consul first in place;
The second was stout Aulus,
Of the Posthumian race.
The Herald of the Latines
From Gabii came in state:
The Herald of the Latines
Passed through Rome's Eastern Gate:
The Herald of the Latines
Did in our Forum stand;
And there he did his office,
A sceptre in his hand.

6.

"Hear, Senators and people
Of the good town of Rome:
The Thirty cities charge you
To bring the Tarquins home:
And if ye still be stubborn,
To work the Tarquins wrong,
The Thirty Cities warn you,
Look that your walls be strong."

7.

Then spake the Consul Aulus,
He spake a bitter jest:
"Once the jays sent a message
Unto the eagle's nest:—
Now yield thou up thine eyrie
Unto the carrion-kite,
Or come forth valiantly, and face
The jays in deadly fight.—

Forth looked in wrath the eagle;
And carrion-kite and jay,
Soon as they saw his beak and claw,
Fled screaming far away."

8.

The Herald of the Latines
Hath hied him back in state:
The Fathers of the City
Are met in high debate.
Then spake the elder Consul,
An ancient man and wise:
"Now hearken, Conscript Fathers,
To that which I advise.
In seasons of great peril
'Tis good that one bear sway;
Then choose we a Dictator,
Whom all men shall obey.
Camerium knows how deeply
The sword of Aulus bites;
And all our city calls him
The man of seventy fights.
Then let him be Dictator
For six months and no more,
And have a Master of the Knights,
And axes twenty-four."

9.

So Aulus was Dictator,
The man of seventy fights;
He made Æbutius Elva
His Master of the Knights.
On the third morn thereafter,
At dawning of the day,

Did Aulus and Æbutius
Set forth with their array.
Sempronius Atratinus
Was left in charge at home
With boys, and with grey-headed men,
To keep the walls of Rome.
Hard by the Lake Regillus
Our camp was pitched at night:
Eastward a mile the Latines lay,
Under the Porcian height.
Far over hill and valley
Their mighty host was spread;
And with their thousand watch-fires
The midnight sky was red.

10.

Up rose the golden morning
Over the Porcian height,
The proud ides of Quintilis
Marked evermore with white.
Not without secret trouble
Our bravest saw the foes,
For, girt by threescore thousand spears,
The thirty standards rose.
From every warlike city
That boasts the Latian name,
Foredoomed to dogs and vultures,
That gallant army came;
From Setia's purple vineyards,
From Norba's ancient wall,
From the white streets of Tusculum,
The proudest town of all;
From where the Witch's Fortress
O'erhangs the dark-blue seas,

From the still glassy lake that sleeps
Beneath Aricia's trees—
Those trees in whose dim shadow
The ghastly priest doth reign,
The priest who slew the slayer,
And shall himself be slain;—
From the drear banks of Ufens,
Where flights of marsh-fowl play,
And buffaloes lie wallowing
Through the hot summer's day;
From the gigantic watch-towers,
No work of earthly men,
Whence Cora's sentinels o'erlook
The never-ending fen;
From the Laurentian jungle,
The wild hog's reedy home;
From the green steps whence Anio leaps
In floods of snow-white foam.

11.

Aricia, Cora, Norba,
Velitræ, with the might
Of Setia and of Tusculum,
Were marshalled on their right:
Their leader was Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name;
Upon his head a helmet
Of red gold shone like flame:
High on a gallant charger
Of dark-grey hue he rode;
Over his gilded armour
A vest of purple flowed,

Woven in the land of sunrise
By Syria's dark-browed daughters,
And by the sails of Carthage brought
Far o'er the southern waters.

12.

Lavinium and Circeium
Had on the left their post,
With all the banners of the marsh,
And banners of the coast.
Their leader was false Sextus,
That wrought the deed of shame:
With restless pace, and haggard face,
To his last field he came.
Men said he saw strange visions,
Which none beside might see;
And that strange sounds were in his ears,
Which none might hear but he.
A woman fair and stately,
But pale as are the dead,
Oft through the watches of the night
Sate spinning by his bed.
And as she plied the distaff,
In a sweet voice and low,
She sang of great old houses,
And fights fought long ago.
So spun she, and so sung she,
Until the East was grey;
Then pointed to her bleeding breast,
And shrieked, and fled away.

13.

But in the centre thickest
Were ranged the shields of foes,

And from the centre loudest
The cry of battle rose.
There Tibur marched and Pedum
Beneath proud Tarquin's rule,
And Ferentinum of the rock,
And Gabii of the pool.
There rode the Volscian succours:
There, in a dark stern ring,
The Roman exiles gathered close
Around the ancient king.
Though white as Mount Soracte,
When winter nights are long,
His beard flowed down o'er mail and belt,
His heart and hand were strong:
Under his hoary eye-brows
Still flashed forth quenchless rage:
And, if the lance shook in his gripe,
'Twas more with hate than age.
Close at his side was Titus
On an Apulian steed,
Titus, the youngest Tarquin,
Too good for such a breed.

14.

Now on each side the leaders
Gave signal for the charge;
And on each side the footmen
Strode on with lance and targe;
And on each side the horsemen
Struck their spurs deep in gore,
And front to front the armies
Met with a mighty roar:

And under that great battle
The earth with blood was red;
And, like the Pomptine fog at morn,
The dust hung overhead;
And louder still and louder,
Rose from the darkened field
The braying of the war-horns,
The clang of sword and shield,
The rush of squadrons sweeping
Like whirlwinds o'er the plain,
The shouting of the slayers,
And screeching of the slain.

15.

False Sextus rode out foremost:
His look was high and bold;
His corslet was of bison's hide,
Plated with steel and gold.
As glares the famished eagle
From the Digentian rock,
On a choice lamb that bounds alone
Before Bandusia's flock,
Herminius glared on Sextus,
And came with eagle speed;
Herminius on black Auster,
Brave champion on brave steed;
In his right hand the broadsword
That kept the bridge so well,
And on his helm the crown he won
When proud Fidenæ fell.
Woe to the maid whose lover
Shall cross his path to-day!
False Sextus saw, and trembled,
And turned, and fled away.

As turns, as flies, the woodman
In the Calabrian brake,
When through the reeds gleams the round eye
Of that fell painted snake;
So turned, so fled, false Sextus,
And hid him in the rear,
Behind the dark Lavinian ranks,
Bristling with crest and spear.

16.

Then far to North Æbutius,
The Master of the Knights,
Gave Tubero of Norba
To feed the Porcian kites.
Next under those red horse-hoofs
Flaccus of Setia lay;
Better had he been pruning
Among his elms that day.
Mamilius saw the slaughter,
And tossed his golden crest,
And towards the Master of the Knights
Through the thick battle pressed.
Æbutius smote Mamilius
So fiercely on the shield,
That the great lord of Tusculum
Well nigh rolled on the field.
Mamilius smote Æbutius,
With a good aim and true,
Just where the neck and shoulder join,
And pierced him through and through;
And brave Æbutius Elva
Fell swooning to the ground:
But a thick wall of bucklers
Encompassed him around.

His clients from the battle
Bare him some little space;
And filled a helm from the dark lake,
And bathed his brow and face;
And when at last he opened
His swimming eyes to light,
Men say, the earliest word he spake
Was, "Friends, how goes the fight?"

17.

But meanwhile in the centre
Great deeds of arms were wrought;
There Aulus the Dictator,
And there Valerius fought.
Aulus, with his good broadsword,
A bloody passage cleared
To where, amidst the thickest foes,
He saw the long white beard.
Flat lighted that good broadsword
Upon proud Tarquin's head.
He dropped the lance: he dropped the reins:
He fell as fall the dead.
Down Aulus springs to slay him,
With eyes like coals of fire;
But faster Titus hath sprung down,
And hath bestrode his sire.
Latian captains, Roman knights,
Fast down to earth they spring;
And hand to hand they fight on foot
Around the ancient king.
First Titus gave tall Cæso
A death wound in the face;
Tall Cæso was the bravest man
Of the brave Fabian race:

Aulus slew Rex of Gabii,
The priest of Juno's shrine:
Valerius smote down Julius,
Of Rome's great Julian line;
Julius, who left his mansion
High on the Velian hill,
And through all turns of weal and woe
Followed proud Tarquin still.
Now right across proud Tarquin
A corpse was Julius laid:
And Titus groaned with rage and grief,
And at Valerius made.
Valerius struck at Titus,
And lopped off half his crest;
But Titus stabbed Valerius
A span deep in the breast.
Like a mast snapped by the tempest,
Valerius reeled and fell.
Ah! woe is me for the good house
That loves the people well!
Then shouted loud the Latines;
And with one rush they bore
The struggling Romans backward
Three lances' length and more:
And up they took proud Tarquin,
And laid him on a shield,
And four strong yeomen bare him,
Still senseless, from the field.

18.

But fiercer grew the fighting
Around Valerius dead;
For Titus dragged him by the foot,
And Aulus by the head.

"On, Latines, on!" quoth Titus,
"See how the rebels fly!"
"Romans, stand firm!" quoth Aulus,
"And win this fight or die!
They must not give Valerius
To raven and to kite;
For aye Valerius loathed the wrong,
And aye upheld the right:
And for your wives and babies
In the front rank he fell.
Now play the men for the good house
That loves the people well!"

19.

Then tenfold round the body
The roar of battle rose,
Like the roar of a burning forest,
When a strong northwind blows.
Now backward, and now forward,
Rocked furiously the fray,
Till none could see Valerius,
And none wist where he lay.
For shivered arms and ensigns
Were heaped there in a mound,
And corpses stiff, and dying men
That writhed and gnawed the ground;
And wounded horses kicking,
And snorting purple foam:
Right well did such a couch befit
A Consular of Rome.

20.

But north looked the Dictator;
North looked he long and hard;

And spake to Caius Cossus,
The Captain of his Guard:
"Caius, of all the Romans
Thou hast the keenest sight;
Say, what through yonder storm of dust
Comes from the Latian right?"

21.

Then answered Caius Cossus:
"I see an evil sight;
The banner of proud Tusculum
Comes from the Latian right;
I see the plumed horsemen;
And far before the rest
I see the dark-grey charger,
I see the purple vest;
I see the golden helmet
That shines far off like flame;
So ever rides Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name."

22.

"Now hearken, Caius Cossus:
Spring on thy horse's back;
Ride as the wolves of Apennine
Were all upon thy track!
Haste to our southward battle;
And never draw thy rein
Until thou find Herminius,
And bid him come amain."

23.

So Aulus spake, and turned him
Again to that fierce strife;

And Caius Cossus mounted,
And rode for death and life.
Loud clanged beneath his horse-hoofs
The helmets of the dead,
And many a curdling pool of blood
Splashed him from heel to head.
So came he far to southward,
Where fought the Roman host,
Against the banners of the marsh
And banners of the coast.
Like corn before the sickle
The stout Lavinians fell,
Beneath the edge of the true sword
That kept the bridge so well.

24.

"Herminius! Aulus greets thee;
He bids thee come with speed,
To help our central battle;
For sore is there our need,
There wars the youngest Tarquin,
And there the Crest of Flame,
The Tusculan Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name.
Valerius hath fallen fighting
In front of our array;
And Aulus of the seventy fields
Alone upholds the day."

25.

Herminius beat his bosom;
But never a word he spake.
He clapped his hand on Auster's mane;
He gave the reins a shake.

Away, away, went Auster,
Like an arrow from the bow:
Black Auster was the fleetest steed
From Aufidus to Po.

26.

Right glad were all the Romans
Who, in that hour of dread,
Against great odds bare up the war
Around Valerius dead,
When from the south the cheering
Rose with a mighty swell;
"Herminius comes, Herminius,
Who kept the bridge so well!"

27.

Mamilius spied Herminius,
And dashed across the way.
"Herminius! I have sought thee
Through many a bloody day.
One of us two, Herminius,
Shall never more go home.
I will lay on for Tusculum,
And lay thou on for Rome!"

28.

All round them paused the battle,
While met in mortal fray
The Roman and the Tusculan,
The horses black and grey.
Herminius smote Mamilius
Through breast-plate and through breast;
And fast flowed out the purple blood
Over the purple vest.

Mamilius smote Herminius
Through head-piece and through head;
And side by side those chiefs of pride
Together fell down dead.
Down fell they dead together
In a great lake of gore;
And still stood all who saw them fall
While men might count a score.

29.

Fast, fast, with heels wild spurning,
The dark-grey charger fled:
He burst through ranks of fighting men;
He sprang o'er heaps of dead.
His bridle far out-streaming,
His flanks all blood and foam,
He sought the southern mountains,
The mountains of his home.
The pass was steep and rugged,
The wolves they howled and whined;
But he ran like a whirlwind up the pass,
And he left the wolves behind.
Through many a startled hamlet
Thundered his flying feet:
He rushed through the gate of Tusculum,
He rushed up the long white street;
He rushed by tower and temple,
And paused not from his race
Till he stood before his master's door
In the stately market-place.
And straightway round him gathered
A pale and trembling crowd,
And when they knew him, cries of rage
Brake forth, and wailing loud:

And women rent their tresses
For their great prince's fall;
And old men girt on their old swords,
And went to man the wall.

30.

But, like a graven image,
Black Auster kept his place,
And ever wistfully he looked
Into his master's face.
The raven-mane that daily,
With pats and fond caresses,
The young Herminia washed and combed,
And twined in even tresses,
And decked with coloured ribands
From her own gay attire,
Hung sadly o'er her father's corpse
In carnage and in mire.
Forth with a shout sprang Titus,
And seized black Auster's rein.
Then Aulus sware a fearful oath,
And ran at him amain.
"The furies of thy brother
With me and mine abide,
If one of your accursed house
Upon black Auster ride!"
As on an Alpine watch-tower
From heaven comes down the flame,
Full on the neck of Titus
The blade of Aulus came:
And out the red blood spouted,
In a wide arch and tall,
As spouts a fountain in the court
Of some rich Capuan's hall.

The knees of all the Latines
Were loosened with dismay
When dead, on dead Herminius,
The bravest Tarquin lay.

31.

And Aulus the Dictator
Stroked Auster's raven mane,
With heed he looked unto the girths,
With heed unto the rein.
"Now bear me well, black Auster,
Into yon thick array;
And thou and I will have revenge
For thy good lord this day."

32.

So spake he; and was buckling
Tighter black Auster's band,
When he was aware of a princely pair
That rode at his right hand.
So like they were, no mortal
Might one from other know:
White as snow their armour was:
Their steeds were white as snow.
Never on earthly anvil
Did such rare armour gleam;
And never did such gallant steeds
Drink of an earthly stream.

33.

And all who saw them trembled,
And pale grew every cheek;

And Aulus the Dictator
Scarce gathered voice to speak.
"Say by what name men call you?
What city is your home?
And wherefore ride ye in such guise
Before the ranks of Rome?"

34.

"By many names men call us;
In many lands we dwell:
Well Samothracia knows us;
Cyrene knows us well.
Our house in gay Tarentum
Is hung each morn with flowers:
High o'er the masts of Syracuse
Our marble portal towers:
But by the proud Eurotas
Is our dear native home;
And for the right we come to fight
Before the ranks of Rome."

35.

So answered those strange horsemen,
And each couched low his spear;
And forthwith all the ranks of Rome
Were bold, and of good cheer:
And on the thirty armies
Came wonder and affright,
And Ardea wavered on the left,
And Cora on the right.
"Rome to the charge!" cried Aulus;
"The foe begins to yield!

Charge for the hearth of Vesta!
Charge for the Golden Shield!
Let no man stop to plunder,
But slay, and slay, and slay:
The Gods who live for ever
Are on our side to-day."

36.

Then the fierce trumpet-flourish
From earth to heaven arose,
The kites know well the long stern swell
That bids the Romans close.
Then the good sword of Aulus
Was lifted up to slay:
Then, like a crag down Apennine,
Rush'd Auster through the fray.
But under those strange horsemen
Still thicker lay the slain;
And after those strange horses
Black Auster toiled in vain.
Behind them Rome's long battle
Came rolling on the foe,
Ensigns dancing wild above,
Blades all in line below.
So comes the Po in flood-time
Upon the Celtic plain:
So comes the squall, blacker than night,
Upon the Adrian main.
Now, by our Sire Quirinus,
It was a goodly sight
To see the thirty standards
Swept down the tide of flight.

So flies the spray of Adria
When the black squall doth blow;
So corn-sheaves in the flood-time
Spin down the whirling Po.
False Sextus to the mountains
Turned first his horse's head:
And fast fled Ferentinum,
And fast Circeium fled.
The horsemen of Nomentum
Spurred hard out of the fray;
The footmen of Velitræ
Threw shield and spear away.
And underfoot was trampled,
Amidst the mud and gore,
The banner of proud Tusculum,
That never stooped before:
And down went Flavius Faustus,
Who led his stately ranks
From where the apple blossoms wave
On Anio's echoing banks,
And Tullus of Arpinum,
Chief of the Volscian aids,
And Metius with the long fair curls,
The love of Anxur's maids,
And the white head of Vulso,
The great Arician seer,
And Nepos of Laurentum,
The hunter of the deer;
And in the back false Sextus
Felt the good Roman steel,
And wriggling in the dust he died,
Like a worm beneath the wheel:

And fliers and pursuers
Were mingled in a mass;
And far away the battle
Went roaring through the pass.

37.

Sempronius Atratinus
Sate in the Eastern Gate.
Beside him were three Fathers,
Each in his chair of state;
Fabius, whose nine stout grandsons
That day were in the field,
And Manlius, eldest of the Twelve
Who keep the Golden Shield;
And Sergius, the High Pontiff,
For wisdom far renowned;
In all Etruria's colleges
Was no such Pontiff found.
And all around the portal,
And high above the wall,
Stood a great throng of people,
But sad and silent all;
Young lads, and stooping elders
That might not bear the mail,
Matrons with lips that quivered,
And maids with faces pale.
Since the first gleam of day-light,
Sempronius had not ceased
To listen for the rushing
Of horse-hoofs from the east.
The mist of eve was rising,
The sun was hastening down,
When he was aware of a princely pair
Fast pricking towards the town.

So like they were, man never
Saw twins so like before;
Red with gore their armour was,
Their steeds were red with gore.

38.

"Hail to the great Asylum!
Hail to the hill-tops seven!
Hail to the fire that burns for aye,
And the shield that fell from heaven!
This day, by Lake Regillus,
Under the Porcian height,
All in the lands of Tusculum
Was fought a glorious fight.
To-morrow your Dictator
Shall bring in triumph home
The spoils of thirty cities
To deck the shrines of Rome!"

39.

Then burst from that great concourse
A shout that shook the towers,
And some ran north, and some ran south,
Crying, "The day is ours!"
But on rode these strange horsemen,
With slow and lordly pace;
And none who saw their bearing
Durst ask their name or race.
On rode they to the Forum,
While laurel-boughs and flowers,
From house-tops and from windows,
Fell on their crests in showers.

When they drew nigh to Vesta,
They vaulted down amain,
And washed their horses in the well
That springs by Vesta's fane.
And straight again they mounted,
And rode to Vesta's door;
Then, like a blast, away they passed,
And no man saw them more.

40.

And all the people trembled,
And pale grew every cheek;
And Sergius the High Pontiff
Alone found voice to speak:
"The Gods who live for ever
Have fought for Rome to-day!
These be the Great Twin Brethren
To whom the Dorians pray.
Back comes the Chief in triumph,
Who, in the hour of fight,
Hath seen the Great Twin Brethren
In harness on his right.
Safe comes the ship to haven,
Through billows and through gales,
If once the Great Twin Brethren
Sit shining on the sails.
Wherefore they washed their horses
In Vesta's holy well,
Wherefore they rode to Vesta's door,
I know, but may not tell.
Here, hard by Vesta's temple,
Build we a stately dome
Unto the Great Twin Brethren
Who fought so well for Rome.

And when the months returning
Bring back this day of fight,
The proud Ides of Quintilis,
Marked evermore with white,
Unto the Great Twin Brethren
Let all the people throng,
With chaplets and with offerings,
With music and with song;
And let the doors and windows
Be hung with garlands all,
And let the Knights be summoned
To Mars without the wall:
Thence let them ride in purple
With joyous trumpet-sound,
Each mounted on his war-horse,
And each with olive crowned;
And pass in solemn order
Before the sacred dome,
Where dwell the Great Twin Brethren
Who fought so well for Rome."

VIRGINIA.

A COLLECTION consisting exclusively of war-songs would give an imperfect, or rather an erroneous, notion of the spirit of the old Latin ballads. The Patricians, during about a century and a half after the expulsion of the Kings, held all the high military commands. A Plebeian, even though, like Lucius Siccius, he were distinguished by his valour and knowledge of war, could serve only in subordinate posts. A minstrel, therefore, who wished to celebrate the early triumphs of his country, could hardly take any but Patricians for his heroes. The warriors who are mentioned in the two preceding lays, Horatius, Lartius, Herminius, Aulus Posthumius, Æbutius Elva, Sempronius Atratinus, Valerius Poplicola, were all members of the dominant order; and a poet who was singing their praises, whatever his own political opinions might be, would naturally abstain from insulting the class to which they belonged, and from reflecting on the system which had placed such men at the head of the legions of the Commonwealth.

But there was a class of compositions in which the great families were by no means so courteously treated. No parts of early Roman history are richer with poetical colouring than those which relate to the long contest between the privileged houses and the commonalty. The population of Rome was, from a very early period, divided

into hereditary castes, which, indeed, readily united to repel foreign enemies, but which regarded each other, during many years, with bitter animosity. Between those castes there was a barrier hardly less strong than that which, at Venice, parted the members of the Great Council from their countrymen. In some respects, indeed, the line which separated an Icilius or a Duilius from a Posthumius or a Fabius was even more deeply marked than that which separated the rower of a gondola from a Contarini or a Morosini. At Venice the distinction was merely civil. At Rome it was both civil and religious. Among the grievances under which the Plebeians suffered, three were felt as peculiarly severe. They were excluded from the highest magistracies; they were excluded from all share in the public lands; and they were ground down to the dust by partial and barbarous legislation touching pecuniary contracts. The ruling class in Rome was a monied class; and it made and administered the laws with a view solely to its own interest. Thus the relation between lender and borrower was mixed up with the relation between sovereign and subject. The great men held a large portion of the community in dependence by means of advances at enormous usury. The law of debt, framed by creditors, and for the protection of creditors, was the most horrible that has ever been known among men. The liberty, and even the life, of the insolvent were at the mercy of the Patrician money-lenders. Children often became slaves in consequence of the misfortunes of their parents. The debtor was imprisoned, not in a public gaol under the care of impartial public functionaries, but in a private workhouse belonging to the creditor. Frightful stories were told respecting these dungeons. It was said that torture and brutal violation were common; that tight stocks, heavy chains, scanty measures of food, were used to punish wretches guilty of nothing but poverty; and that brave sol-

diers, whose breasts were covered with honourable scars, were often marked still more deeply on the back by the scourges of high-born usurers.

The Plebeians were, however, not wholly without constitutional rights. From an early period they had been admitted to some share of political power. They were enrolled in the centuries, and were allowed a share, considerable though not proportioned to their numerical strength, in the disposal of those high dignities from which they were themselves excluded. Thus their position bore some resemblance to that of the Irish Catholics during the interval between the year 1792 and the year 1829. The Plebeians had also the privilege of annually appointing officers, named Tribunes, who had no active share in the government of the Commonwealth, but who, by degrees, acquired a power which made them formidable even to the ablest and most resolute Consuls and Dictators. The person of the Tribune was inviolable; and, though he could directly effect little, he could obstruct everything.

During more than a century after the institution of the Tribuneship, the Commons struggled manfully for the removal of grievances under which they laboured; and, in spite of many checks and reverses, succeeded in wringing concession after concession from the stubborn aristocracy. At length, in the year of the city 378, both parties mustered their whole strength for their last and most desperate conflict. The popular and active Tribune, Caius Licinius, proposed the three memorable laws which are called by his name, and which were intended to redress the three great evils of which the Plebeians complained. He was supported, with eminent ability and firmness, by his colleague, Lucius Sextius. The struggle appears to have been the fiercest that ever in any community terminated without an appeal to arms. If such a contest had raged in any Greek city, the streets would have run with blood. But, even in the

paroxysms of faction, the Roman retained his gravity, his respect for law, and his tenderness for the lives of his fellow-citizens. Year after year Licinius and Sextius were re-elected Tribunes. Year after year, if the narrative which has come down to us is to be trusted, they continued to exert, to the full extent, their power of stopping the whole machine of government. No curule magistrates could be chosen; no military muster could be held. We know too little of the state of Rome in those days to be able to conjecture how, during that long anarchy, the peace was kept, and ordinary justice administered between man and man. The animosity of both parties rose to the greatest height. The excitement, we may well suppose, would have been peculiarly intense at the annual election of Tribunes. On such occasions there can be little doubt that the great families did all that could be done, by threats and caresses, to break the union of the Plebeians. That union, however, proved indissoluble. At length the good cause triumphed. The Licinian laws were carried. Lucius Sextius was the first Plebeian Consul, Caius Licinius the third.

The results of this great change we e singularly happy and glorious. Two centuries of prosperity, harmony, and victory followed the reconciliation of the orders. Men who remembered Rome engaged in waging petty wars almost within sight of the Capitol lived to see her the mistress of Italy. While the disabilities of the Plebeians continued, she was scarcely able to maintain her ground against the Volscians and Hernicans. When those disabilities were removed, she rapidly became more than a match for Carthage and Macedon.

During the great Licinian contest the Plebeian poets were, doubtless, not silent. Even in modern times songs have been by no means without influence on public affairs; and we may therefore infer, that, in a society where printing was unknown, and where books were rare, a pathetic

or humorous party-ballad must have produced effects such as we can but faintly conceive. It is certain that satirical poems were common at Rome from a very early period. The rustics, who lived at a distance from the seat of government, and took little part in the strife of factions, gave vent to their petty local animosities in coarse Fescennine verse. The lampoons of the city were doubtless of a higher order; and their sting was early felt by the nobility. For in the Twelve Tables, long before the time of the Licinian laws, a severe punishment was denounced against the citizen who should compose or recite verses reflecting on another.* Satire is, indeed, the only sort of composition in which the Latin poets, whose works have come down to us, were not mere imitators of foreign models; and it is therefore the only sort of composition in which they had never been rivalled. It was not, like their tragedy, their comedy, their epic and lyric poetry, a hot-house plant which, in return for assiduous and skilful culture, yielded only scanty and sickly fruits. It was hardy, and full of sap; and in all the various juices which it yielded might be distinguished the flavour of the Ausonian soil. "Satire," said Quintilian, with just pride, "is all our own." It sprang, in truth, naturally from the constitution of the Roman government and from the spirit of the Roman people; and, though it submitted to metrical rules derived from Greece, it retained to the last its essentially Roman character. Lucilius was the earliest satirist whose works were held in esteem under the Cæsars. But, many years before Lucilius was born, Nævius had been flung into a dungeon, and guarded there with circumstances of unusual rigour till the Tribunes

* Cicero justly infers from this law that there had been early Latin poets whose works had been lost before his time. "Quamquam id quidem etiam xii tabulæ declarant; condi jam tum solitum esse carmen, quod ne liceret fieri ad alterius injuriam lege sanxerunt."—*Tusc.* iv. 2.

interfered in his behalf, on account of the bitter lines in which he had attacked the great Cæcilian family.* The genius and spirit of the Roman satirists survived the liberties of their country, and were not extinguished by the cruel despotism of the Julian and Flavian Emperors. The great poet who told the story of Domitian's turbot was the legitimate successor of those forgotten minstrels whose songs animated the factions of the infant Republic.

Those minstrels, as Niebuhr has remarked, appear to have generally taken the popular side. We can hardly be mistaken in supposing that, at the great crisis of the civil conflict, they employed themselves in versifying all the most powerful and virulent speeches of the Tribunes, and in heaping abuse on the chiefs of the aristocracy. Every personal defect, every domestic scandal, every tradition dishonourable to a noble house, would be sought out, brought into notice, and exaggerated. The illustrious head of the aristocratical party, Marcus Furius Camillus, might perhaps be, in some measure, protected by his venerable age and by the memory of his great services to the State. But Appius Claudius Crassus enjoyed no such immunity. He was descended from a long line of ancestors distinguished by their haughty demeanour, and by the inflexibility with which they had withstood all the demands of the Plebeian order. While the political conduct and the deportment of the Claudian nobles drew upon them the fiercest public hatred, they were wanting, if any credit is due to the early history of Rome, in a class of qualities which, in a military Commonwealth, is sufficient to cover a multitude of offences. Several of them appear to have been eloquent, versed in civil business, and learned after the fashion of their age; but in war they were not distinguished by skill or valour. Some of them, as if conscious where their

* Plautus, Miles Gloriosus. Aulus Gellius, iii. 3.

weakness lay, had, when filling the highest magistracies, taken internal administration as their department of public business, and left the military command to their colleagues.* One of them had been intrusted with an army, and had failed ignominiously.† None of them had been honoured with a triumph. None of them had achieved any martial exploit, such as those by which Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, Titus Quinctius Capitolinus, Aulus Cornelius Cossus, and, above all, the great Camillus, had extorted the reluctant esteem of the multitude. During the Licinian conflict, Appius Claudius Crassus signalised himself by the ability and severity with which he harangued against the two great agitators. He would naturally, therefore, be the favourite mark of the Plebeian satirists; nor would they have been at a loss to find a point on which he was open to attack.

His grandfather, named, like himself, Appius Claudius, had left a name as much detested as that of Sextus Tarquinius. He had been Consul more than seventy years before the introduction of the Licinian laws. By availing himself of a singular crisis in public feeling, he had obtained the consent of the Commons to the abolition of the Tribuneship, and had been the chief of that Council of Ten to which the whole direction of the State had been committed. In a few months his administration had become universally odious. It was swept away by an irresistible outbreak of popular fury; and its memory was still held in abhorrence by the whole city. The immediate cause of the downfall of this execrable government was said to have been an attempt made by Appius Claudius on the chastity of a beautiful young girl of humble birth. The story ran, that the Decemvir, unable to succeed by bribes and solicita-

* In the years of the city 260, 304, and 330.
† In the year of the city 282.

tions, resorted to an outrageous act of tyranny. A vile dependent of the Claudian house laid claim to the damsel as his slave. The cause was brought before the tribunal of Appius. The wicked magistrate, in defiance of the clearest proofs, gave judgment for the claimant. But the girl's father, a brave soldier, saved her from servitude and dishonour by stabbing her to the heart in the sight of the whole Forum. That blow was the signal for a general explosion. Camp and city rose at once; the Ten were pulled down; the Tribuneship was re-established; and Appius escaped the hands of the executioner only by a voluntary death.

It can hardly be doubted that a story so admirably adapted to the purposes both of the poet and of the demagogue would be eagerly seized upon by minstrels burning with hatred against the Patrician order, against the Claudian house, and especially against the grandson and namesake of the infamous Decemvir.

In order that the reader may judge fairly of these fragments of the lay of Virginia, he must imagine himself a Plebeian who has just voted for the re-election of Sextius and Licinius. All the power of the Patricians has been exerted to throw out the two great champions of the Commons. Every Posthumius, Æmilius, and Cornelius has used his influence to the utmost. Debtors have been let out of the workhouses on condition of voting against the men of the people; clients have been posted to hiss and interrupt the favourite candidates; Appius Claudius Crassus has spoken with more than his usual eloquence and asperity; all has been in vain; Licinius and Sextius have a fifth time carried all the tribes; work is suspended; the booths are closed; the Plebeians bear on their shoulders the two champions of liberty through the Forum. Just at this moment it is announced that a popular poet, a zealous adherent of the Tribunes, has made a new song which will cut the

Claudian family to the heart. The crowd gathers round him, and calls on him to recite it. He takes his stand on the spot where, according to tradition, Virginia, more than seventy years ago, was seized by the pandar of Appius, and he begins his story.

VIRGINIA.

FRAGMENTS OF A LAY SUNG IN THE FORUM ON THE DAY WHEREON LUCIUS SEXTIUS SEXTINUS LATERANUS AND CAIUS LICINIUS CALVUS STOLO WERE ELECTED TRIBUNES OF THE COMMONS THE FIFTH TIME, IN THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCLXXXII.

Ye good men of the Commons, with loving hearts and true,
Who stand by the bold Tribunes that still have stood by you,
Come, make a circle round me, and mark my tale with care,
A tale of what Rome once hath borne; of what Rome yet may bear.
This is no Grecian fable, of fountains running wine,
Of maids with snaky tresses, or sailors turned to swine.
Here, in this very Forum, under the noonday sun,
In sight of all the people, the bloody deed was done.
Old men still creep among us who saw that fearful day,
Just seventy years and seven ago, when the wicked Ten bare sway.

Of all the wicked Ten still the names are held accursed,
And of all the wicked Ten, Appius Claudius was the worst.
He stalked along the Forum like King Tarquin in his pride:
Twelve axes waited on him, six marching on a side;
The townsmen shrank to right and left, and eyed askance with fear
His lowering brow, his curling mouth which alway seemed to sneer:
That brow of hate, that mouth of scorn, marks all the kindred still;
For never was there Claudius yet but wished the Commons ill:
Nor lacks he fit attendance; for close behind his heels,
With outstretched chin and crouching pace, the client Marcus steals,

His loins girt up to run with speed, be the errand what it may,
And the smile flickering on his cheek, for aught his lord may say.
Such varlets pimp and jest for hire among the lying Greeks:
Such varlets still are paid to hoot when brave Licinius speaks.
Where'er ye shed the honey, the buzzing flies will crowd;
Where'er ye fling the carrion, the raven's croak is loud;
Where'er down Tiber garbage floats, the greedy pike ye see;
And wheresoe'er such lord is found, such client still will be.

Just then, as through one cloudless chink in a black stormy sky
Shines out the dewy morning-star, a fair young girl came by.
With her small tablets in her hand, and her satchel on her arm,
Home she went bounding from the school, nor dreamed of shame or harm;
And past those dreaded axes she innocently ran,
With bright, frank, brow that had not learned to blush at gaze of man;
And up the Sacred Street she turned, and, as she danced along,
She warbled gaily to herself lines of the good old song,
How for a sport the princes came spurring from the camp,
And found Lucrece, combing the fleece, under the midnight lamp.
The maiden sang as sings the lark, when up he darts his flight,
From his nest in the green April corn, to meet the morning light;
And Appius heard her sweet young voice, and saw her sweet young face,
And loved her with the accursed love of his accursed race,
And all along the Forum, and up the Sacred Street,
His vulture eye pursued the trip of those small glancing feet.

* * * * * * *

Over the Alban mountains the light of morning broke;
From all the roofs of the Seven Hills curled the thin wreaths of smoke:
The city gates were opened; the Forum, all alive,
With buyers and with sellers was humming like a hive.
Blithely on brass and timber the craftsman's stroke was ringing,
And blithely o'er her panniers the market-girl was singing,
And blithely young Virginia came smiling from her home:
Ah! woe for young Virginia, the sweetest maid in Rome!
With her small tablets in her hand, and her satchel on her arm,
Forth she went bounding to the school, nor dreamed of shame or harm.

She crossed the Forum shining with stalls in alleys gay,
And just had reached the very spot whereon I stand this day,
When up the varlet Marcus came; not such as when erewhile
He crouched behind his patron's heels with the true client smile:
He came with lowering forehead, swollen features, and clenched fist,
And strode across Virginia's path, and caught her by the wrist.
Hard strove the frighted maiden, and screamed with look aghast;
And at her scream from right and left the folk came running fast;
The money-changer Crispus, with his thin silver hairs,
And Hanno from the stately booth glittering with Punic wares,
And the strong smith Muræna, grasping a half-forged brand,
And Volero the flesher, his cleaver in his hand.
All came in wrath and wonder; for all knew that fair child;
And, as she passed them twice a day, all kissed their hands and smiled;
And the strong smith Muræna gave Marcus such a blow,
The caitiff reeled three paces back, and let the maiden go.
Yet glared he fiercely round him, and growled in harsh, fell tone,
"She's mine, and I will have her. I seek but for mine own:
She is my slave, born in my house, and stolen away and sold,
The year of the sore sickness, ere she was twelve hours old.
'Twas in the sad September, the month of wail and fright,
Two augurs were borne forth that morn; the Consul died ere night.
I wait on Appius Claudius; I waited on his sire:
Let him who works the client wrong beware the patron's ire!"

So spake the varlet Marcus; and dread and silence came
On all the people at the sound of the great Claudian name.
For then there was no Tribune to speak the word of might,
Which makes the rich man tremble, and guards the poor man's right.
There was no brave Licinius, no honest Sextius then;
But all the city, in great fear, obeyed the wicked Ten.
Yet ere the varlet Marcus again might seize the maid,
Who clung tight to Muræna's skirt, and sobbed, and shrieked for aid,
Forth through the throng of gazers the young Icilius pressed,
And stamped his foot, and rent his gown, and smote upon his breast,

And sprang upon that column, by many a minstrel sung,
Whereon three mouldering helmets, three rusting swords are hung,
And beckoned to the people, and in bold voice and clear
Poured thick and fast the burning words which tyrants quake to hear;

"Now, by your children's cradles, now, by your fathers' graves,
Be men to-day, Quirites, or be for ever slaves!
For this did Servius give us laws? For this did Lucrece bleed?
For this was the great vengeance done on Tarquin's evil seed?
For this did those false sons make red the axes of their sire?
For this did Scævola's right hand hiss in the Tuscan fire?
Shall the vile fox-earth awe the race that stormed the lion's den?
Shall we, who could not brook one lord, crouch to the wicked Ten?
Oh for that ancient spirit, which curbed the Senate's will!
Oh for the tents which in old time whitened the Sacred Hill!
In those brave days our fathers stood firmly side by side;
They faced the Marcian fury; they tamed the Fabian pride:
They drove the fiercest Quinctius an outcast forth from Rome;
They sent the haughtiest Claudius with shivered fasces home.
But what their care bequeathed us our madness flung away:
All the ripe fruit of threescore years was blighted in a day.
Exult, ye proud Patricians! The hard-fought fight is o'er.
We strove for honours—'twas in vain: for freedom—'tis no more.
No crier to the polling summons the eager throng;
No Tribune breathes the word of might that guards the weak from wrong.
Our very hearts, that were so high, sink down beneath your will.
Riches, and lands, and power, and state—ye have them:—keep them still.
Still keep the holy fillets; still keep the purple gown,
The axes, and the curule chair, the car, and laurel crown;
Still press us for your cohorts, and, when the fight is done,
Still fill your garners from the soil which our good swords have won.
Still, like a spreading ulcer, which leech-craft may not cure,
Let your foul usance eat away the substance of the poor.
Still let your haggard debtors bear all their fathers bore;
Still let your dens of torment be noisome as of yore;

No fire when Tiber freezes; no air in dog-star heat;
And store of rods for free-born backs, and holes for free-born feet.
Heap heavier still the fetters; bar closer still the grate;
Patient as sheep we yield us up unto your cruel hate.
But, by the Shades beneath us, and by the Gods above,
Add not unto your cruel hate your yet more cruel love!
Have ye not graceful ladies, whose spotless lineage springs
From Consuls, and High Pontiffs, and ancient Alban kings?
Ladies, who deign not on our paths to set their tender feet,
Who from their cars look down with scorn upon the wondering street,
Who in Corinthian mirrors their own proud smiles behold,
And breathe of Capuan odours, and shine with Spanish gold?
Then leave the poor Plebeian his single tie to life—
The sweet, sweet love of daughter, of sister, and of wife,
The gentle speech, the balm for all that his vexed soul endures,
The kiss, in which he half forgets even such a yoke as yours.
Still let the maiden's beauty swell the father's breast with pride;
Still let the bridegroom's arms infold an unpolluted bride.
Spare us the inexpiable wrong, the unutterable shame,
That turns the coward's heart to steel, the sluggard's blood to flame.
Lest, when our latest hope is fled, ye taste of our despair,
And learn by proof, in some wild hour, how much the wretched dare."

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Straightway Virginius led the maid a little space aside,
To where the reeking shambles stood, piled up with horn and hide,
Close to yon low dark archway, where, in a crimson flood,
Leeps down to the great sewer the gurgling stream of blood.
Hard by, a flesher on a block had laid his whittle down:
Virginius caught the whittle up, and hid it in his gown.
And then his eyes grew very dim, and his throat began to swell,
And in a hoarse, changed voice he spake, "Farewell, sweet child! Farewell!
Oh! how I loved my darling! Though stern I sometimes be,
To thee, thou know'st, I was not so. Who could be so to thee?

And how my darling loved me! How glad she was to hear
My footstep on the threshold when I came back last year!
And how she danced with pleasure to see my civic crown,
And took my sword, and hung it up, and brought me forth my gown!
Now, all those things are over—yes, all thy pretty ways,
Thy needlework, thy prattle, thy snatches of old lays;
And none will grieve when I go forth, or smile when I return,
Or watch beside the old man's bed, or weep upon his urn.
The house that was the happiest within the Roman walls,
The house that envied not the wealth of Capua's marble halls,
Now, for the brightness of thy smile, must have eternal gloom,
And for the music of thy voice, the silence of the tomb.
The time is come. See how he points his eager hand this way!
See how his eyes gloat on thy grief, like a kite's upon the prey!
With all his wit, he little deems, that, spurned, betrayed, bereft,
Thy father hath in his despair one fearful refuge left.
He little deems that in this hand I clutch what still can save
Thy gentle youth from taunts and blows, the portion of the slave;
Yea, and from nameless evil, that passeth taunt and blow—
Foul outrage which thou know'st not, which thou shalt never know.
Then clasp me round the neck once more, and give me one more kiss;
And now, mine own dear little girl, there is no way but this."
With that he lifted high the steel, and smote her in the side,
And in her blood she sank to earth, and with one sob she died.

Then, for a little moment, all people held their breath;
And through the crowded Forum was stillness as of death;
And in another moment brake forth from one and all
A cry as if the Volscians were coming o'er the wall.
Some with averted faces shrieking fled home amain;
Some ran to call a leech; and some ran to lift the slain:
Some felt her lips and little wrist, if life might there be found;
And some tore up their garments fast, and strove to stanch the wound.

In vain they ran, and felt, and stanched; for never truer blow
That good right arm had dealt in fight against a Volscian foe.

When Appius Claudius saw that deed, he shuddered and sank down,
And hid his face some little space with the corner of his gown,
Till, with white lips and bloodshot eyes, Virginius tottered nigh,
And stood before the judgment-seat, and held the knife on high.
"Oh! dwellers in the nether gloom, avengers of the slain,
By this dear blood I cry to you, do right between us twain;
And even as Appius Claudius hath dealt by me and mine,
Deal you by Appius Claudius and all the Claudian line!"
So spake the slayer of his child, and turned, and went his way;
But first he cast one haggard glance to where the body lay,
And writhed, and groaned a fearful groan, and then, with steadfast feet,
Strode right across the market-place unto the Sacred Street.

Then up sprang Appius Claudius: "Stop him; alive or dead!
Ten thousand pounds of copper to the man who brings his head."
He look'd upon his clients; but none would work his will.
He look'd upon his lictors; but they trembled, and stood still.
And, as Virginius through the press his way in silence cleft,
Ever the mighty multitude fell back to right and left.
And he hath passed in safety unto his woeful home;
And there ta'en horse to tell the camp what deeds are done in Rome.

By this the flood of people was swollen from every side,
And streets and porches round were filled with that o'erflowing tide;
And close around the body gathered a little train
Of them that were the nearest and dearest to the slain.
They brought a bier, and hung it with many a cypress crown,
And gently they uplifted her, and gently laid her down.
The face of Appius Claudius wore the Claudian scowl and sneer,
And in the Claudian note he cried, "What doth this rabble here?
Have they no crafts to mind at home, that hitherward they stray?
Ho! lictors, clear the market-place, and fetch the corpse away!"
Till then the voice of pity and fury was not loud;
But a deep sullen murmur wandered among the crowd,

Like the moaning noise that goes before the whirlwind on the deep,
Or the growl of a fierce watch-dog but half aroused from sleep.
But when the lictors at that word, tall yeomen all and strong,
Each with his axe and sheaf of twigs, went down into the throng,
Those old men say, who saw that day of sorrow and of sin,
That in the Roman Forum was never such a din.
The wailing, hooting, cursing, the howls of grief and hate,
Were heard beyond the Pincian hill, beyond the Latin gate.
But close around the body, where stood the little train
Of them that were the nearest and dearest to the slain,
No cries were there, but teeth set fast, low whispers, and black frowns,
And breaking up of benches, and girding up of gowns.
'Twas well the lictors might not pierce to where the maiden lay,
Else surely had they been all twelve torn limb from limb that day.
Right glad they were to struggle back, blood streaming from their heads,
With axes all in splinters, and raiment all in shreds.
Then Appius Claudius gnawed his lip, and the blood left his cheek;
And thrice he beckoned with his hand, and thrice he strove to speak;
And thrice the tossing Forum set up a frightful yell.
"See, see, thou dog! what thou hast done; and hide thy shame in hell!
Thou that would'st make our maidens slaves must first make slaves of men.
Tribunes! Hurrah for Tribunes! Down with the wicked Ten!"
And straightway, thick as hailstones, came whizzing through the air
Pebbles, and bricks, and potsherds, all round the curule chair:
And upon Appius Claudius great fear and trembling came;
For never was a Claudius yet brave against aught but shame.
Though the great houses love us not, we own, to do them right,
That the great houses, all save one, have borne them well in fight.
Still Caius of Corioli, his triumphs, and his wrongs,
His vengeance, and his mercy, live in our camp-fire songs.
Beneath the yoke of Furius oft have Gaul and Tuscan bowed;
And Rome may bear the pride of him of whom herself is proud.

But evermore a Claudius shrinks from a stricken field,
And changes colour like a maid at sight of sword and shield.
The Claudian triumphs all were won within the City-towers;
The Claudian yoke was never pressed on any necks but ours.
A Cossus, like a wild cat, springs ever at the face;
A Fabius rushes like a boar against the shouting chase;
But the vile Claudian litter, raging with currish spite,
Still yelps and snaps at those who run, still runs from those who smite.
So now 'twas seen of Appius. When stones began to fly,
He shook, and crouched, and wrung his hands, and smote upon his thigh.
"Kind clients, honest lictors, stand by me in this fray!
Must I be torn in pieces? Home, home the nearest way!"
While yet he spake, and looked around with a bewildered stare,
Four sturdy lictors put their necks beneath the curule chair;
And fourscore clients on the left, and fourscore on the right,
Arrayed themselves with swords and staves, and loins girt up for fight.
But, though without or staff or sword, so furious was the throng,
That scarce the train with might and main could bring their lord along.
Twelve times the crowd made at him; five times they seized his gown;
Small chance was his to rise again, if once they got him down:
And sharper came the pelting; and evermore the yell—
"Tribunes! we will have Tribunes!"—rose with a louder swell:
And the chair tossed as tosses a bark with tattered sail
When raves the Adriatic beneath an Eastern gale,
When the Calabrian sea-marks are lost in clouds of spume,
And the great Thunder-Cape has donned his veil of inky gloom.
One stone hit Appius in the mouth, and one beneath the ear;
And ere he reached Mount Palatine, he swooned with pain and fear.
His cursed head, that he was wont to hold so high with pride,
Now, like a drunken man's, hung down, and swayed from side to side;

And when his stout retainers had brought him to his door,
His face and neck were all one cake of filth and clotted gore.
As Appius Claudius was that day, so may his grandson be,
God send Rome one such other sight, and send me there to see!

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THE PROPHECY OF CAPYS.

It can hardly be necessary to remind any reader that, according to the popular tradition, Romulus, after he had slain his grand-uncle Amulius, and restored his grandfather Numitor, determined to quit Alba, the hereditary domain of the Sylvian princes, and to found a new city. The Gods, it was added, vouchsafed the clearest signs of the favour with which they regarded the enterprise, and of the high destinies reserved for the young colony.

This event was likely to be a favourite theme of the old Latin minstrels. They would naturally attribute the project of Romulus to some divine intimation of the power and prosperity which it was decreed that his city should attain. They would probably introduce seers foretelling the victories of unborn Consuls and Dictators, and the last great victory would generally occupy the most conspicuous place in the prediction. There is nothing strange in the supposition that the poet who was employed to celebrate the first great triumph of the Romans over the Greeks might throw his song of exultation into this form.

The occasion was one likely to excite the strongest feelings of national pride. A great outrage had been followed by a great retribution. Seven years before this time, Lucius Posthumius Megellus, who sprang from one of the noblest houses of Rome, and had been thrice Consul, was sent ambassador to Tarentum, with charge to demand

reparation for grievous injuries. The Tarentines gave him audience in their theatre, where he addressed them in such Greek as he could command, which, we may well believe, was not exactly such as Cineas would have spoken. An exquisite sense of the ridiculous belonged to the Greek character; and closely connected with this faculty was a strong propensity to flippancy and impertinence. When Posthumius placed an accent wrong, his hearers burst into a laugh. When he remonstrated, they hooted him, and called him barbarian; and at length hissed him off the stage as if he had been a bad actor. As the grave Roman retired, a buffoon, who, from his constant drunkenness, was nicknamed the Pint-pot, came up with gestures of the grossest indecency, and bespattered the senatorial gown with filth. Posthumius turned round to the multitude, and held up the gown, as if appealing to the universal law of nations. The sight only increased the insolence of the Tarentines. They clapped their hands, and set up a shout of laughter which shook the theatre. "Men of Tarentum," said Posthumius, "it will take not a little blood to wash this gown."*

Rome, in consequence of this insult, declared war against the Tarentines. The Tarentines sought for allies beyond the Ionian Sea. Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, came to their help with a large army; and, for the first time, the two great nations of antiquity were fairly matched against each other.

The fame of Greece in arms, as well as in arts, was then at the height. Half a century earlier, the career of Alexander had excited the admiration and terror of all nations from the Ganges to the Pillars of Hercules. Royal houses, founded by Macedonian captains, still reigned at Antioch and Alexandria. That barbarian warriors, led by barbarian chiefs, should win a pitched battle against Greek valour guided by Greek science, seemed as incredible as it would

* Dion. Hal. De Legationibus.

now seem that the Burmese or the Siamese should, in the open plain, put to flight an equal number of the best English troops. The Tarentines were convinced that their countrymen were irresistible in war; and this conviction had emboldened them to treat with the grossest indignity one whom they regarded as the representative of an inferior race. Of the Greek generals then living, Pyrrhus was indisputably the first. Among the troops who were trained in the Greek discipline, his Epirotes ranked high. His expedition to Italy was a turning-point in the history of the world. He found there a people who, far inferior to the Athenians and Corinthians in the fine arts, in the speculative sciences, and in all the refinements of life, were the best soldiers on the face of the earth. Their arms, their gradations of rank, their order of battle, their method of intrenchment, were all of Latian origin, and had all been gradually brought near to perfection, not by the study of foreign models, but by the genius and experience of many generations of great native commanders. The first words which broke from the king, when his practised eye had surveyed the Roman encampment, were full of meaning:—"These barbarians," he said, "have nothing barbarous in their military arrangements." He was at first victorious; for his own talents were superior to those of the captains who were opposed to him; and the Romans were not prepared for the onset of the elephants of the East, which were then for the first time seen in Italy—moving mountains, with long snakes for hands.* But the victories of the Epirotes were fiercely disputed, dearly purchased, and altogether unprofitable. At length, Manius Curius Dentatus, who had in his first consulship won two triumphs, was again placed at the head of the Roman Commonwealth, and sent to encounter the invaders. A great battle was fought

* *Anguimanus* is the old Latin epithet for an elephant. Lucretius, ii. 538. v. 1302.

near Beneventum. Pyrrhus was completely defeated. He repassed the sea; and the world learned with amazement, that a people had been discovered, who, in fair fighting, were superior to the best troops that had been drilled on the system of Parmenio and Antigonus.

The conquerors had a good right to exult in their success; for their glory was all their own. They had not learned from their enemy how to conquer him. It was with their own national arms, and in their own national battle-array, that they had overcome weapons and tactics long believed to be invincible. The pilum and the broadsword had vanquished the Macedonian spear. The legion had broken the Macedonian phalanx. Even the elephants, when the surprise produced by their first appearance was over, could cause no disorder in the steady yet flexible battalions of Rome.

It is said by Florus, and may easily be believed, that the triumph far surpassed in magnificence any that Rome had previously seen. The only spoils which Papirius Cursor and Fabius Maximus could exhibit were flocks and herds, waggons of rude structure, and heaps of spears and helmets. But now, for the first time, the riches of Asia and the arts of Greece adorned a Roman pageant. Plate, fine stuffs, costly furniture, rare animals, exquisite paintings and sculptures, formed part of the procession. At the banquet would be assembled a crowd of warriors and statesmen, among whom Manius Curius Dentatus would take the highest room. Caius Fabricius Luscinus, then, after two Consulships and two triumphs, Censor of the Commonwealth, would doubtless occupy a place of honour at the board. In situations less conspicuous probably lay some of those who were, a few years later, the terror of Carthage; Caius Duilius, the founder of the maritime greatness of his country; Marcus Atilius Regulus, who owed to defeat a renown far higher than that which he had derived from his victories; and Caius Lutatius Catulus, who, while suffering from a

grievous wound, fought the great battle of the Ægates, and brought the first Punic war to a triumphant close. It is impossible to recapitulate the names of these eminent citizens, without reflecting that they were all, without exception, Plebeians, and would, but for the ever memorable struggle maintained by Caius Licinius and Lucius Sextius, have been doomed to hide in obscurity, or to waste in civil broils, the capacity and energy which prevailed against Pyrrhus and Hamilcar.

On such a day we may suppose that the patriotic enthusiasm of a Latin poet would vent itself in reiterated shouts of *Io triumphe*, such as were uttered by Horace on a far less exciting occasion, and in boasts resembling those which Virgil, two hundred and fifty years later, put into the mouth of Anchises. The superiority of some foreign nations, and especially of the Greeks, in the lazy arts of peace, would be admitted with disdainful candour; but pre-eminence in all the qualities which fit a people to subdue and govern mankind would be claimed for the Romans.

The following lay belongs to the latest age of Latin ballad-poetry. Nævius and Livius Andronicus were probably among the children whose mothers held them up to see the chariot of Curius go by. The minstrel who sang on that day might possibly have lived to read the first hexameters of Ennius, and to see the first comedies of Plautus. His poem, as might be expected, shows a much wider acquaintance with the geography, manners, and productions of remote nations, than would have been found in compositions of the age of Camillus. But he troubles himself little about dates; and having heard travellers talk with admiration of the Colossus of Rhodes, and of the structures and gardens with which the Macedonian kings of Syria had embellished their residence on the banks of the Orontes, he has never thought of inquiring whether these things existed in the age of Romulus.

THE PROPHECY OF CAPYS.

A LAY SUNG AT THE BANQUET IN THE CAPITOL, ON THE DAY WHEN MANIUS CURIUS DENTATUS, A SECOND TIME CONSUL, TRIUMPHED OVER KING PYRRHUS AND THE TARENTINES, IN THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCCLXXIX.

1.

Now slain is King Amulius,
Of the great Sylvian line,
Who reigned in Alba Longa,
On the throne of Aventine.
Slain is the Pontiff Camers,
Who spake the words of doom:
"The children to the Tiber,
The mother to the tomb."

2.

In Alba's lake no fisher
His net to-day is flinging:
On the dark rind of Alba's oaks
To-day no axe is ringing:
The yoke hangs o'er the manger:
The scythe lies in the hay:
Through all the Alban villages
No work is done to-day.

3.

And every Alban burgher
Hath donned his whitest gown;
And every head in Alba
Weareth a poplar crown;
And every Alban door-post
With boughs and flowers is gay:
For to-day the dead are living;
The lost are found to-day.

4.

They were doomed by a bloody king:
They were doomed by a lying priest:
They were cast on the raging flood:
They were tracked by the raging beast.
Raging beast and raging flood
Alike have spared the prey;
And to-day the dead are living:
The lost are found to-day.

5.

The troubled river knew them,
And smoothed his yellow foam,
And gently rocked the cradle
That bore the fate of Rome.
The ravening she-wolf knew them,
And licked them o'er and o'er,
And gave them of her own fierce milk,
Rich with raw flesh and gore.
Twenty winters, twenty springs,
Since then have rolled away;
And to-day the dead are living:
The lost are found to-day.

6.

Blithe it was to see the twins,
Right goodly youths and tall,
Marching from Alba Longa
To their old grandsire's hall.
Along their path fresh garlands
Are hung from tree to tree:
Before them stride the pipers,
Piping a note of glee.

7.

On the right goes Romulus,
With arms to the elbows red,
And in his hand a broadsword,
And on the blade a head—
A head in an iron helmet,
With horse-hair hanging down,
A shaggy head, a swarthy head,
Fixed in a ghastly frown—
The head of King Amulius
Of the great Sylvian line,
Who reigned in Alba Longa,
On the throne of Aventine.

8.

On the left side goes Remus,
With wrists and fingers red,
And in his hand a boar-spear,
And on the point a head—
A wrinkled head and aged,
With silver beard and hair,
And holy fillets round it,
Such as the pontiffs wear—

The head of ancient Camers,
Who spake the words of doom:
"The children to the Tiber:
The mother to the tomb."

9.

Two and two behind the twins
Their trusty comrades go,
Four and twenty valiant men,
With club, and axe, and bow.
On each side every hamlet
Pours forth its joyous crowd,
Shouting lads, and baying dogs,
And children laughing loud,
And old men weeping fondly
As Rhea's boys go by,
And maids who shriek to see the heads,
Yet, shrieking, press more nigh.

10.

So they marched along the lake;
They marched by fold and stall,
By corn-field and by vineyard,
Unto the old man's hall.

11.

In the hall-gate sate Capys,
Capys, the sightless seer;
From head to foot he trembled
As Romulus drew near.
And up stood stiff his thin white hair,
And his blind eyes flashed fire:
"Hail! foster child of the wond'rous nurse!
Hail! son of the wond'rous sire!

12.

"But thou—what dost thou here
In the old man's peaceful hall?
What doth the eagle in the coop,
The bison in the stall?
Our corn fills many a garner;
Our vines clasp many a tree;
Our flocks are white on many a hill;
But these are not for thee.

13.

"For thee no treasure ripens
In the Tartessian mine:
For thee no ship brings precious bales
Across the Lybian brine:
Thou shalt not drink from amber;
Thou shalt not rest on down;
Arabia shall not steep thy locks,
Nor Sidon tinge thy gown.

14.

"Leave gold and myrrh and jewels,
Rich table and soft bed,
To them who of man's seed are born,
Whom woman's milk hath fed.
Thou wast not made for lucre,
For pleasure, nor for rest;
Thou, that art sprung from the War-god's loins,
And hast tugged at the she-wolf's breast.

15.

"From sunrise until sunset
All earth shall hear thy fame:

A glorious city thou shalt build,
And name it by thy name:
And there, unquenched through ages,
Like Vesta's sacred fire,
Shall live the spirit of thy nurse,
The spirit of thy sire.

16.

"The ox toils through the furrow,
Obedient to the goad;
The patient ass, up flinty paths,
Plods with his weary load:
With whine and bound the spaniel
His master's whistle hears;
And the sheep yields her patiently
To the loud clashing shears.

17.

"But thy nurse will hear no master,
Thy nurse will bear no load;
And woe to them that shear her,
And woe to them that goad!
When all the pack, loud baying,
Her bloody lair surrounds,
She dies in silence, biting hard,
Amidst the dying hounds.

18.

"Pomona loves the orchard;
And Liber loves the vine;
And Pales loves the straw built-shed
Warm with the breath of kine;

And Venus loves the whispers
Of plighted youth and maid,
In April's ivory moonlight
Beneath the chesnut shade.

19.

"But thy father loves the clashing
Of broadsword and of shield:
He loves to drink the steam that reeks
From the fresh battle-field:
He smiles a smile more dreadful
Than his own dreadful frown,
When he sees the thick black cloud of smoke
Go up from the conquered town.

20.

"And such as is the War-god,
The author of thy line,
And such as she who suckled thee,
Even such be thou and thine.
Leave to the soft Campanian
His baths and his perfumes;
Leave to the sordid race of Tyre
Their dyeing-vats and looms:
Leave to the sons of Carthage
The rudder and the oar:
Leave to the Greek his marble Nymphs
And scrolls of wordy lore.

21.

"Thine, Roman, is the pilum:
Roman, the sword is thine,
The even trench, the bristling mound,
The legion's ordered line;

And thine the wheels of triumph,
Which with their laurelled train
Move slowly up the shouting streets
To Jove's eternal fane.

22.

"Beneath thy yoke the Volscian
Shall veil his lofty brow:
Soft Capua's curled revellers
Before thy chair shall bow:
The Lucumoes of Arnus
Shall quake thy rods to see:
And the proud Samnite's heart of steel
Shall yield to only thee.

23.

"The Gaul shall come against thee
From the land of snow and night;
Thou shalt give his fair-haired armies
To the raven and the kite.

24.

"The Greek shall come against thee,
The conqueror of the East.
Beside him stalks to battle
The huge earth-shaking beast,
The beast on whom the castle
With all its guards doth stand,
The beast who hath between his eyes
The serpent for a hand.
First march the bold Epirotes,
Wedged close with shield and spear;
And the ranks of false Tarentum
Are glitering in the rear.

25.

"The ranks of false Tarentum
Like hunted sheep shall fly:
In vain the bold Epirotes
Shall round their standards die:
And Apennine's grey vultures
Shall have a noble feast
On the fat and on the eyes
Of the huge earth-shaking beast.

26.

"Hurrah! for the good weapons
That keep the War-god's land.
Hurrah! for Rome's stout pilum
In a stout Roman hand.
Hurrah! for Rome's short broadsword,
That through the thick array
Of levelled spears and serried shields
Hews deep its gory way.

27.

"Hurrah! for the great triumph
That stretches many a mile.
Hurrah! for the wan captives
That pass in endless file.
Ho! bold Epirotes, whither
Hath the Red King ta'en flight?
Ho! dogs of false Tarentum,
Is not the gown washed white?

28.

"Hurrah! for the great triumph
That stretches many a mile.

Hurrah! for the rich dye of Tyre,
And the fine web of Nile,
The helmets gay with plumage
Torn from the pheasant's wings,
The belts set thick with starry gems
That shone on Indian kings,
The urns of massy silver,
The goblets rough with gold,
The many-coloured tablets bright
With loves and wars of old,
The stone that breathes and struggles,
The brass that seems to speak;—
Such cunning they who dwell on high
Have given unto the Greek.

29.

"Hurrah! for Manius Curius,
The bravest son of Rome,
Thrice in utmost need sent forth,
Thrice drawn in triumph home.
Weave, weave, for Manius Curius
The third embroidered gown:
Make ready the third lofty car,
And twine the third green crown;
And yoke the steeds of Rosea
With necks like a bended bow;
And deck the bull, Mevania's bull,
The bull as white as snow.

30.

"Blest and thrice blest the Roman
Who sees Rome's brightest day,
Who sees that long victorious pomp
Wind down the Sacred Way,

And through the bellowing Forum,
And round the Suppliant's Grove,
Up to the everlasting gates —
Of Capitolian Jove.

31.

"Then where, o'er two bright havens,
The towers of Corinth frown;
Where the gigantic King of day
On his own Rhodes looks down;
Where soft Orontes murmurs
Beneath the laurel shades;
Where Nile reflects the endless length
Of dark-red colonnades;
Where in the still deep water,
Sheltered from waves and blasts,
Bristles the dusky forest
Of Byrsa's thousand masts;
Where fur-clad hunters wander
Amidst the Northern ice;
Where through the sand of morning-land
The camel bears the spice;
Where Atlas flings his shadow
Far o'er the Western foam,
Shall be great fear on all who hear
The mighty name of Rome."

THE END.